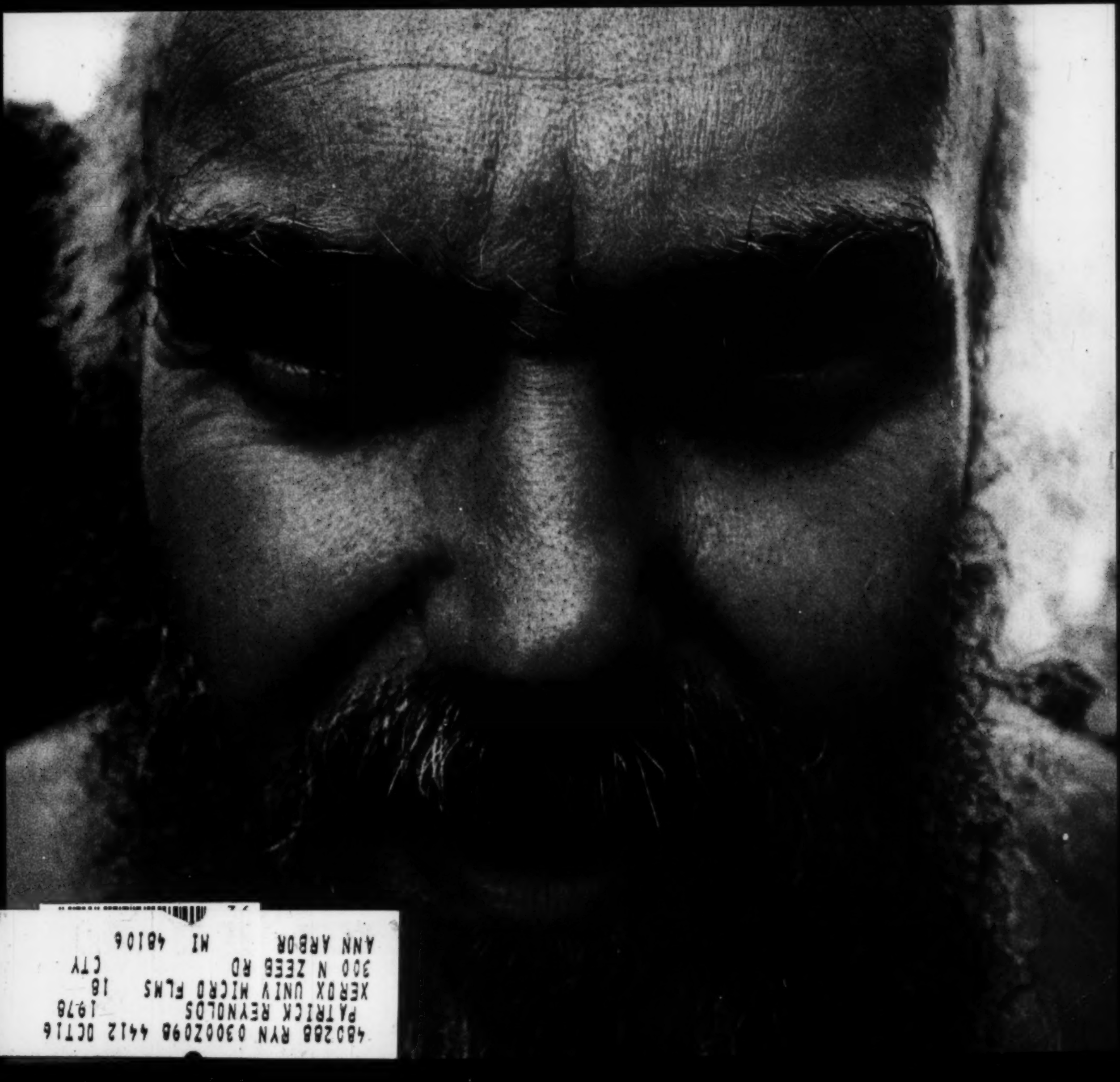
Californians Zero In On Gays • Assassination Update

NewTimes
SEPTEMBER 4, 1978 $1.00
THE FEATURE NEWS MAGAZINE ®

ODYSSEY OF AN AMERICAN GURU

SURVIVING THE '70s WITH RAM DASS

by Calvin Fentress



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Power. With distortion so low it's more than inaudible, it's barely measurable. That isn't news. It's Technics.

Stereo Receivers	Min. RMS Power Per Channel into 8 Ohms from 20Hz–20kHz	Total Harmonic Distortion at Rated Power (Max.)	FM Sensitivity Stereo—50dB*	Phono S/N (10mV IHF A)
SA-1000	330 watts	0.03%	36.2 dBf	97dB
SA-800	125 watts	0.04%	36.2 dBf	95dB
SA-700	100 watts	0.04%	36.2 dBf	95dB
SA-600	70 watts	0.04%	37.2 dBf	90dB
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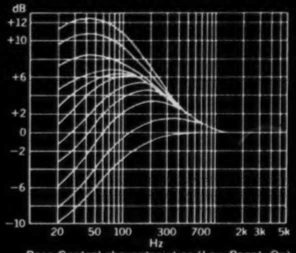
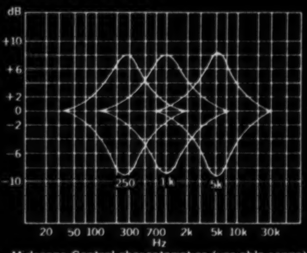
*IHF '75 standard

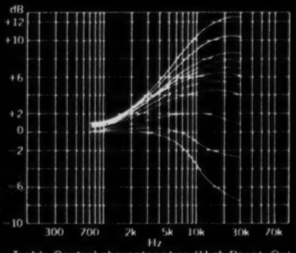
Look at the chart. That's Technics, too. Surprisingly good performance that comes as no surprise.



Bass Control characteristics (Low Boost: On)



Midrange Control characteristics (variable range)



Treble Control characteristics (High Boost: On)

Still, you expect the unexpected from Technics and with Acoustic Control that's just what you get. With the low-boost switch and the bass control, you can accentuate drums and bass instruments with a minimum of boominess. Or use the treble high-boost switch to bring out the brilliance in both vocals and instrumentals by boosting the frequencies starting at 2 kHz, all the way up to 30 kHz.

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Big power with little distortion from Technics isn't news. Acoustic Control is.

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FM
AM
88
90
92
94
96
98
100
530
600
700
800
1000
POWER LEVEL
LEFT
RIGHT
DISPLAY
SPEAKERS
POWER DISPLAY RANGE
POWER
ON
OFF
PHONES
A
B
BASS
MID RANGE
LEVEL
TREBLE
BOOST
LOW
HIGH
ACOUSTIC CONTROL
MUTING
ACOUSTIC CONTROL
30Hz
8kHz
ON
-20dB
12dB/OCT FILTERS

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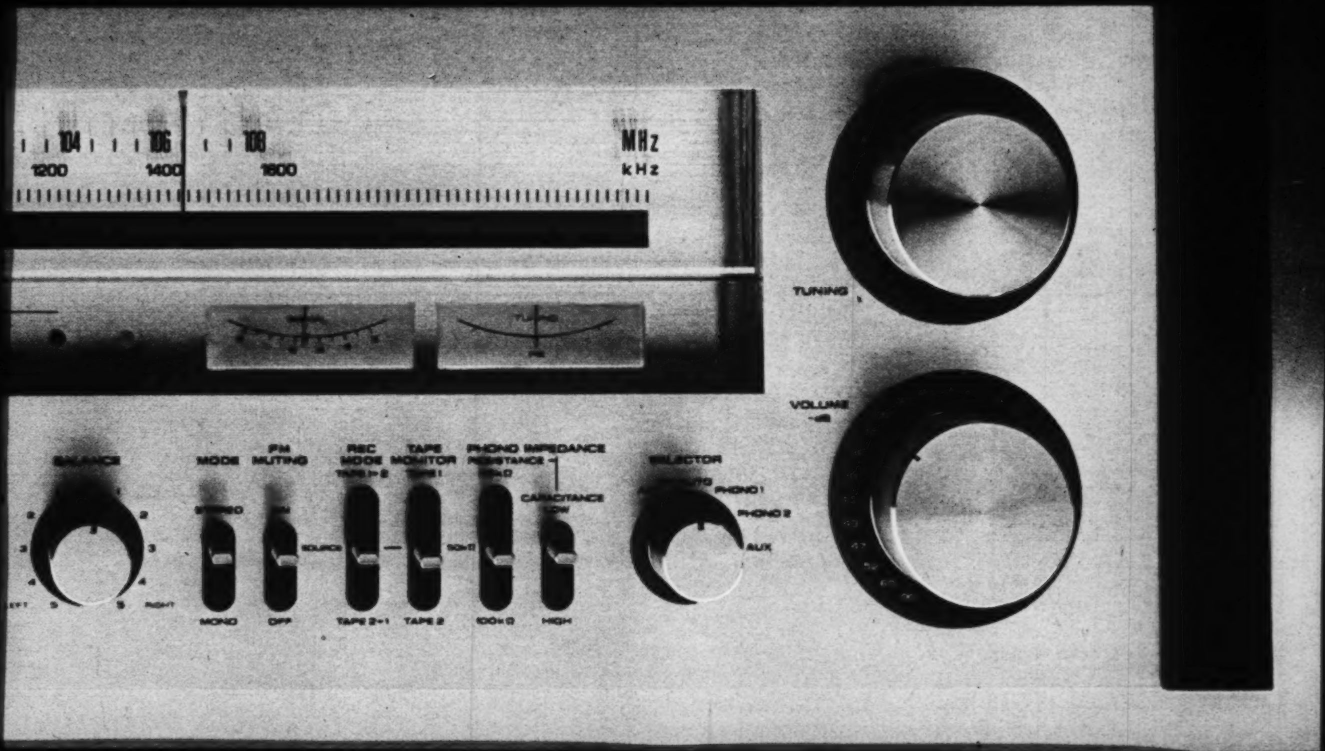
Technics new receivers. Big power with little distortion as well as outstanding performance isn't news from Technics. Giving you more ways to control it, is.

Technics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STEREO
MONO
FM MUTING
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REC MODE
TAPE 1→2
TAPE 2→1
TAPE MONITOR
TAPE 1
TAPE 2
SOURCE
PHONO IMPEDANCE
RESISTANCE
CAPACITANCE
LOW
HIGH
100kΩ
SELECTOR
PHONO 1
PHONO 2
AUX
LEFT
RIGHT

NewTimes

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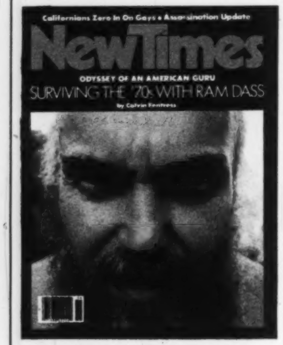
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SURVIVING THE '70s WITH RAM DASS
by Calvin Fentress

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Academic *enfant terrible,* psychedelic pioneer, barnstorming holy man—America's premier guru has survived several exotic incarnations already. His followers say he is a source of strength and inspiration. His critics call him a liar and a fraud. We leave it to you.
by CALVIN FENTRESS

Cover photograph by Peter Barry Chowka

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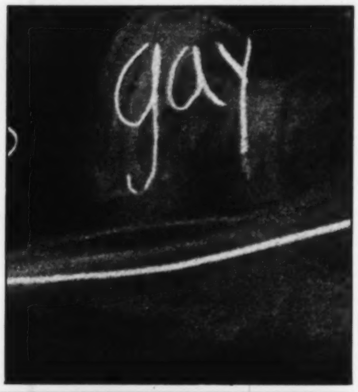
The anti-gay crusaders are marching through California, and gays are fighting back with new political skill. Some friends have let them down, but this time, they might actually have a chance.
by ROBERT SHRUM



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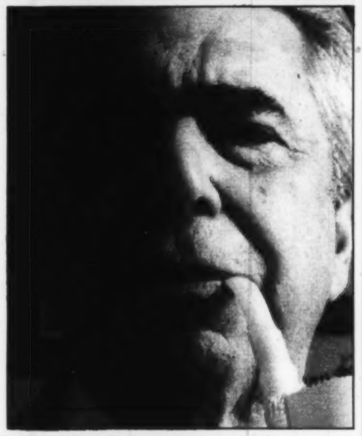
When a San Francisco judge threw *Niemi* v. *NBC* out of court, lawyer Marvin Lewis took it as a compliment. But then, everyone said he'd never collect $50,000 for his previous client, who claimed a cable car accident had turned her into a nymphomaniac.
by MARLENE ADLER MARKS



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"All that live must die," Shakespeare wrote. Not necessarily, answer scientists who today are trying to figure out how to fool Mother Nature into granting a longer life, perhaps even immortality.
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HIGH QUALITY CASSETTE
ENGINEERED EXPRESSLY FOR MUSIC REPRODUCTION | 90-MINUTES
MADE IN JAPAN

Beautiful Music Blank.

SONY
90 MINUTES
CHROME CASSETTE
MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE IN MUSIC REPRODUCTION

Best Blank.

SONY
90 MINUTES
FERRI CHROME CASSETTE
DOUBLE COATED
THE ULTIMATE IN HIGH FIDELITY (MUSIC REPRODUCTION)

LETTERS

Clothes Minded

Mr. Levine's article on transvestites (August 7) was interesting, but told only the very sad side of the lives that many of us lead. Each day there are more and more transvestites who are coming to lead happy and well-adjusted lives as a result of groups like the ones mentioned in the article. It is unfortunate that society is still uncomfortable with people who cannot fit into pat and easily defined roles.

Victorian attitudes toward sex and sex roles run very deep, and it must be hard to understand why a man who knows himself to be heterosexual would want to emulate the female role. I've done it for almost 30 years and I don't understand it myself.

How much more humane we would all be if we could truly live and let live.

Kelly Michaels
Los Angeles, California

Quit masquerading as a more mature, hip, informed and sensitive version of Old Times. Your article on transvestites was one of the most shortsighted, reactionary pieces of horseshit I've seen in a while. An embarrassment to gays and straights alike? It seems to me that 1) who is or is not embarrassed is hardly the issue, and 2) whoever is embarrassed perhaps had better take a closer look at the security of their sexual identity. Bizarre as this kind of behavior might seem to some, it is not arbitrary or absurd. There are reasons. Not to mention the fact that the people you chose to feature seemed to me to be maintaining a significant level of discretion.

Perhaps the fact that these men arrive at such a behavioral extreme is only one of the many outcries at a narrow, overly role-conscious (and self-conscious) society. As a woman, I feel I can see ways in which men might find the male role, particularly in America, lacking in scope and repertoire—and it is dismaying. Even more dismaying, however, is your myopic, insipid treatment of this matter.

Patricia Cooper
Denver, Colorado

In your article "Dressing Up in Limbo" I feel you should have looked a bit further into why cross-dressing is a "purely male phenomenon." When smoking is not allowed, little kids want to try it. When alcohol was banned, speakeasies were the rage. And if items of male clothing were forbidden to women, some would wear them.

If a man of 1776 wore stockings, makeup, silks, lace and wigs, it would have been perfectly acceptable. Today in Greece and Scotland, some men wear what could be called a skirt. It is only a matter of social customs at any particular time.

Women in this circumstance are less noticeable and therefore more acceptable. By no means would male cross-dressing be a problem or such a thrill if people looked upon it the same way they do when females do it. A 12-year-old boy wearing his mother's clothes is ridiculed; a woman wearing her husband's clothes is ignored—except perhaps for a comment on the fit.

Name withheld

In Defense of Springsteen

Please tell Jim Miller to go back to his Shaun Cassidy records and leave us rock and rollers alone. Bruce Springsteen will take us to the Promised Land—Miller is not invited.

Janet Scott
Minneapolis, Minnesota

After reading Jim Miller's review of Bruce Springsteen's new release, *Darkness on the Edge of Town,* it is apparent that Miller does not take time to listen before he types out the insults. He admitted in the opening line that he had only listened to the album once, yet he carries on about how Springsteen is just a "casualty of media canonization."

Springsteen's music deserves to be listened to. His poetry is powerful; his music is the roots. I'm betting he gets Album of the Year.

Carl Rizzuto
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Reviewing TV Reviews

Richard M. Levine's article on the newspaper medium's relative neglect of television reportage (August 7) omits two crucial factors: a) that heavy viewers of T.V. and heavy readers of newspapers tend to not be the same people, and b) viewers can simply see for themselves, without leaving home or spending a cent, whether a new T.V. show appeals.

Perhaps this explains why Broadway producers still nervously await the first editions after opening night, while Paul Klein can afford not to know how much a newspaper costs these days.

Susan Zamichow
New York

NewTimes

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Special Report

by Jerry Policoff and William Scott Malone

A GREAT SHOW, A LOUSY INVESTIGATION

The setting was familiar: an ornate, high-ceilinged congressional hearing room, bright with the glare of television lights and packed to the brim with spectators and reporters straining for every word. On the dais, the committee members appeared solemn and deliberate, as well they might, for before them history was literally in the making. It could have been Watergate, Koreagate, the Kefauver hearings or any of the investigative extravaganzas that periodically bestir Congress from its somnambulance. But this hearing, into the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., was different, both in tactics and outcome—an outcome that, unknown to the assembled spectators and reporters, had already been determined months in advance.

So it was last month as the House Select Committee on Assassinations opened the final, public phase of its two-year investigation of the Kennedy and King murders. The first major witness was James Earl Ray, King's convicted (and, at one point, confessed) killer. He behaved in fitting fashion, proclaiming his innocence and attacking the committee itself. The reporters scribbled furiously. It was great theater.

No doubt the theatrics will continue (provided Congress appropriates the $790,000 in additional funding the committee says it needs to stay in business past Labor Day) for the rest of the hearings' scheduled eight-week run. A number of the upcoming performers are sure-fire box-office: Marina Oswald, widow of the accused presidential assassin; Richard Helms, late of the CIA and conspiracies of his own; and, as a special, added attraction, a former President of the United States, Gerald R. Ford. Lending additional appeal will be revelations about organized crime, spies, sex, all manner of plotting and shadowy men, and Cuba. (Castro himself chatted with a committee delegation—three congressmen plus staff members—and provided documents that committee sources call "highly interesting." In a move that may show his feelings about the committee, Castro also revealed much of the material to the press, claiming the documents prove that the CIA attempted to frame him for Kennedy's murder.)

In the end, with all due gravity, the committee will issue its final report—which, in the best traditions of *Alice in Wonderland*, is being written even now, weeks before the investigation ends.

It has always been an odd quest, the search for the murderers of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, undertaken largely by odd men, often for odd reasons. And there is no question that the history of the House Select Committee on Assassinations has been odd indeed. Approved, reluctantly, by the House, only after considerable pressure from the Congressional Black Caucus, the committee was chaired early on by Texas Congressman Henry Gonzalez, whose investigative expertise sprang from the happenstance of riding in a presidential motorcade through Dallas on November 22, 1963. As chief counsel, the committee hired Richard A. Sprague, who prosecuted the killers of United Mine Workers insurgent Jock Yablonski. But Sprague's tenure was brief. Within a few months, Gonzalez was accusing Sprague of being a liar and a "rattlesnake," while Sprague was calling his chairman "a sorry example of a person." Both finally ended up quitting, and the committee survived a House move to kill it by a bare 49-vote margin.

Since then, the committee, with new chairman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), a leading member of the Black Caucus, and new chief counsel G. Robert Blakey, has been quietly toiling away, safe from the light of publicity. More than 3,000 interviews have been conducted with witnesses; autopsy results have been studied; ballistics tests have been conducted; files have been pored over; and, by the committee's reckoning, answers have been found.

What, precisely, those answers are will remain secret until their release this December. But *New Times* has learned that the committee is leaning toward the following conclusions:

- That Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in shooting Kennedy.
- That Martin Luther King was the victim, essentially, of a "family plot," involving James Earl Ray and his brothers Jerry (see "A Man He Calls Raoul," *NT*, 4/1/77) and John Larry, both convicted felons, and his sister, Carol Pepper. Committee sources say the report will state that James Earl Ray did, in fact, fire the fatal shot at King, and that his family helped him escape. The committee has not yet decided whether this questionable scenario will be broadened to include the possible participation of a number of white racists and businessmen, who have been previously connected to the Ray family.
- That contrary to the Warren Commission's findings, Jack Ruby, Lee Harvey Oswald's killer, had extensive ties to organized crime and was heavily involved in gunrunning to Fidel Castro's revolutionaries. (see "The Secret Life of Jack Ruby," *NT*, 1/23/78.)

In the best traditions of *Alice in Wonderland*, the House Assassinations Committee is writing its report now, before the probe is over

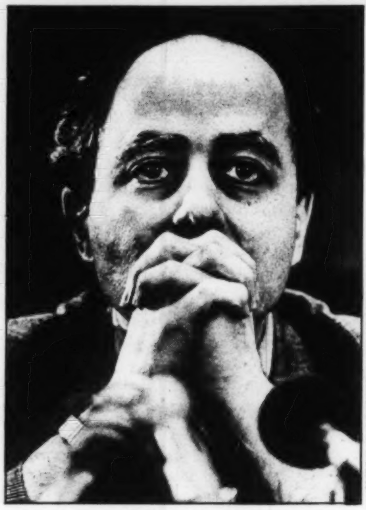
- That Lee Harvey Oswald's possible connections to intelligence organizations, foreign or domestic, remain unclear.
- That both the CIA and the FBI concealed—and that the FBI also destroyed—evidence the Warren Commission vitally needed, but did so out of bureaucratic embarrassment. In short, the work of both agencies was slipshod, not sinister.

In addition, the committee also conducted a number of tests on crucial pieces of the physical evidence in the Kennedy assassination. In one of them, neutron activation analysis (NAA) purportedly "matched" shards of metal taken from the wrist of Texas Governor John Connally to the "magic bullet" which, according to the Warren Commission, struck the President in the back, exited his throat and continued on to inflict five additional wounds to Governor Connally. The match-up, if true, substantiates the "magic bullet" theory and, with it, a key point in the lone assassin argument. Photo analysis has also been run on several films of the assassination, including the famous 8mm "home movie" taken by Abraham Zapruder, as well as another film shot by Orville Nix. The Nix film, according to some Warren Commission critics, revealed the presence of an assassin on the grassy knoll. But the committee's analysis shows no assassins. Finally, the committee summoned a panel of forensic pathologists to examine the X-rays and photographs taken during Kennedy's autopsy. The panel concluded that the President was struck twice from the rear: once in the back of the neck (by the bullet which allegedly continued on to strike Connally), and a second, fatal time in the top of the head.

The committee's conclusions will have their critics. Already assassination researchers, including some on the committee itself, have found things to question, such as:

- The authenticity of the autopsy X-rays and photographs.
- The credibility of the forensic pathologists. (A number of the doctors are personally and professionally affiliated with members of a controversial 1968 panel which studied the same materials and came to the same conclusions. One of the committee's pathologists, Dr. Werner U. Spitz, the medical examiner of Wayne County, Michigan, is a friend of Commander James Humes, one of the three doctors who conducted the highly criticized autopsy on the President. Spitz is also a figure of some infamy in his own right, having been chastised in 1976 by a special county task force for "improper and . . . morally reprehensible" actions in performance of his official duties.)
- The credibility of the as-yet-unrevealed NAA techniques. Similar tests were performed for the Warren Commission, which supressed the news that the analyses had ever been conducted (leading some to speculate that the results did not support the commission's lone-assassin conclusion). Some of the committee's tests were performed by Alfred P. Guinn, who also conducted some of the Warren Commission's NAA tests.
- The intelligence connections of Itek Corporation, which briefed the committee on photoanalysis. Itek, whose briefings supported the Warren Commission's conclusions, is headed by a former CIA agent and holds a number of contracts with government agencies, including the CIA.

Complicating the committee's tentative lone-assassin conclusion are the recent findings of a respected Boston acoustics firm, commissioned by the committee to analyze interference-ridden tapes of Dallas police transmissions. The firm found evidence of four or five shots—findings which, if true, rule out Oswald as the lone assassin. The test results, leaked to the press in early August, have been dubbed "Blakey's problem" by some staffers.


JAMES K. W. ATHERTON/WASHINGTON POST

Chief counsel G. Robert Blakey: Low marks for the professor

As a result, the report itself will be considerably less than the full and final word on who killed Kennedy and King that it was intended to be. Many areas—notably Oswald's motives and whether he was directed by others—will be left purposely ambiguous, to the considerable irritation of some present and former committee investigators. "What they are going to put out," says Alvin B. Lewis Jr., former acting chief counsel, "is a document that is safe and politically acceptable to the Congress."

The man overseeing the report—and every aspect of the investigation—is committee chief counsel G. Robert Blakey. He selected the witnesses, decided which leads to follow and which to ignore, picked the forensic panel, called on Itek to brief the committee, hired and fired the staff, and set its agenda.

The "professor," as Blakey prefers to be called, is, to all appearances, the thoughtful soul of academe—quiet, deliberative, meticulous. His résumé is impressive: four-year veteran of the organized crime and racketeering section of Robert Kennedy's Justice Department; former chief counsel to the Senate Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures; principal consultant to President Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice; consultant to *Time*, *Look* and *Life*; and director of Cornell University's Institute on Organized Crime. At the time of his appointment in June 1977, he seemed the perfect man for the job, an intellectual cop, a man who knew the inner workings of crime.

So, at least, went the reputation. But beneath the impressive credentials and well-polished manners, a different Robert Blakey emerges—an ambitious academic on the make, apparently unconcerned with constitutional niceties or the accepted procedures of investigation. It was this Robert Blakey who helped draft the Nixon-backed S 1, a bill that would have severely limited civil liberties. It was this same Robert Blakey who personally wrote the infamous Title III of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, which for the first time authorized court-approved wire-tapping and electronic surveillance by law enforcement agencies. Not that Blakey's dedication to the war on crime was total. On at least one occasion he allied himself with rather peculiar company: Rancho La Costa, a multimillion dollar San Diego resort financed with Teamster pension fund money, and the subject, since its opening 13 years ago, of numerous investigations. One of those investigations was conducted by two freelance reporters, Jeff Gerth and Lowell Bergman, on assignment for *Penthouse*. As a result of their March 1975 article, La Costa sued the magazine for $630 million, one of the largest libel suits in history. In the initial court proceedings, the resort and its co-plaintiffs produced a host of character affidavits, including one provided by none other than G. Robert Blakey, who, while conceding ignorance of the truth of *Penthouse*'s charges, branded the article "reckless in the extreme."

Another cause for worry is Blakey's association with people who were potential witnesses before his own committee. During his days as a major consultant to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement in the mid-sixties, for instance, Blakey served closely with four men connected to the original investigation of John Kennedy's murder: Nicholas Katzenbach, who, as deputy attorney general in 1964, applied severe and as yet unexplained pressure on the Warren Commission to immediately endorse, prior to independent investigation, the notion that Oswald acted alone; Leon Jaworski, special counsel to the Warren Commission and the man charged with investigating whether Oswald had any ties to U.S. intelligence (Jaworski found none; three years later, it was disclosed that a foundation of which Jaworski was a trustee was a secret conduit for CIA funds); Robert G. Storey, another special counsel to the Warren Commission; and Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell, who, as president-elect of the American Bar Association, was named by the ABA as a legal observer to the Warren Commission to

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protect Oswald's rights, and instead spent much of his time devising ways to disbar commission critic Mark Lane.

All the same, committee investigators were more than willing to give Blakey a chance. After the contentiousness under Sprague and Gonzalez, the committee finally seemed to be getting down to business. Even Blakey's opening remark at his first news conference—"there will not be any more news conferences"—seemed to be a mark of serious purpose.

They soon discovered, though, that Blakey's style of investigation was most peculiar. He exhibited, for instance, a positive obsession with secrecy. Soon after his arrival, all staff members were required to sign a "non-disclosure agreement" that prohibited any outside discussions relating to committee operations and compelled reporting any such inquiries to the committee. Failure to do so could bring a $5,000 fine, dismissal, disqualification from future congressional employment and possible criminal prosecution. Ten prominent critics of the Warren Commission whom Blakey quietly invited to Washington for a discussion of the case last September were also required to sign the agreements, even though Blakey revealed nothing of substance. Later, Blakey instructed the staff to have no contact with critics without his specific, personal authorization. By then, the press had been barred as well, since, in one of his first official acts, Blakey had closed the press office. Even the aides of the members of the committee were cut off from reviewing the progress of the investigation. So great was Blakey's compulsion for secrecy that he ordered copies of the contracts of all consultants withheld from the House Administration Committee—a move virtually unprecedented in congressional history.

By contrast, Blakey was oddly trusting of the FBI and the CIA, agencies which, in the minds of many, are themselves under suspicion. Dismissing such concerns, and a preliminary report of the committee (which had questioned both the CIA's and FBI's handling of the Kennedy case), Blakey established a cozy relationship with the Bureau and the Agency. Before examining any classified CIA files, committee investigators had to sign a CIA secrecy oath similar to that signed by agency critic Frank Snepp and all other CIA personnel. Any notes made from CIA documents were subject to Agency clearance. And, in a burst of startling beneficence, Blakey agreed to let the CIA review the final report of the committee before it was released to Congress and the public. Blakey's all-too-willing accession to intelligence procedure flabbergasted his own staff and others familiar with the committee's work, among them Richard Sprague. Asked Sprague: "What's the point of getting material in the first place, if they are going to control who sees it and what we can do with it?" In return for the committee's cooperation, the intelligence agencies promised unlimited access to their files, but have continued to stall and on at least one occasion, the CIA was caught lying about the existence of files.

"What they are going to put out," says the former acting chief counsel, "is a document that is safe and politically acceptable"

What troubled investigators far more, though, was Blakey's dogged narrowing of the focus of their probing. Soon after his arrival, Blakey lectured the assembled staff on the importance of limiting objectives and later divided them into five separate task forces, with sharply defined areas of responsibility. Where once Sprague had talked of an "open-ended investigation" lasting five years or more, Blakey now instructed his people to have the case wrapped up by the end of the year. Those who quarreled with the new direction of the investigation soon found themselves unemployed. One of the first to go was Kevin Walsh, a researcher, and uncommon among the staff in that he had actually studied the Kennedy case before being hired. But Walsh was known to have friends among Warren Commission critics, and, within a few months, Blakey requested his resignation for what was termed "poor work habits." Donovan Gay, the committee's chief of research, was squeezed out following a series of disagreements with Blakey and the gradual diminution of his access to classified documents. Another researcher, Colleen Boland, was fired without explanation. She promptly sued the committee, and, in an ironic turnabout, retained as counsel two of Blakey's predecessors, Richard Sprague and Alvin Lewis. And, within the past six weeks, Blakey himself has discharged 28 staffers—24 of them investigators—on grounds that the committee was running out of money. Blakey would be in a position to know. Last February, he *returned* $425,000 of the committee's budget to Congress, saying that the funds were not needed.

By far the most explosive departure, though—and the one which says the most about the committee's workings—was the resignation of Robert J. Lehner. Lehner, a former Manhattan assistant district attorney and chief deputy counsel in charge of the King investigation, had, during the brief regime of Richard Sprague, developed a good working relationship with James Earl Ray, and was pursuing a number of leads Ray and others had provided him. Certainly, there were leads aplenty in the killing of Martin Luther King. Who, if anyone, was the mysterious "Raoul" whom Ray claimed had framed him? What was the source of Ray's apparently limitless funding? How did he manage to come by forged passports and identity papers? Why had the Memphis police department "stripped" King of protection shortly before his assassination? To what lengths was the FBI willing to go to "get" King? It was these and many other questions that Lehner and his investigative task force were trying to answer—to the considerable discomfort of G. Robert Blakey. According to committee sources, Blakey insisted on a far narrower and neater inquiry, limited essentially to James Earl Ray, the members of his immediate family and J.B. Stoner, head of the racist National States Rights Party. A confrontation ensued. Ultimately, Lehner took his case to the full committee, which proceeded to split into two opposing factions. Black congressional support, which might have been expected for Lehner, mysteriously failed to materialize, even as rumors circulated of FBI tapes which, if disclosed, would prove embarrassing to several of King's former key associates. In any event, Blakey carried the day by issuing a "him or me" ultimatum. At that point, Lehner stepped aside. "The committee would never have survived if Blakey quit," one congressional aide said later. "You've got to remember, this committee is walking on egg shells."

Lehner's resignation brought a major shift of focus in the King investigation. Ray, who had been cooperating, suddenly turned sullen. His family began to feel pressure from Blakey. Their financial records were subpoenaed, and Ray's brothers and sister soon felt more like suspects than witnesses. Citing possible conflict of interest, the committee refused to allow Jerry Ray to retain Mark Lane (who is also representing James Earl) as counsel, at the same time ominously warning Jerry that he would be wise to secure another lawyer. (He eventually represented himself.) Ray's sister, Carol Pepper, was likewise refused permission to retain the lawyer of her

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choice, Jim Lesar, a specialist on the King case who had once represented James Earl. (She managed to keep him only after the committee backed away from a showdown.) The committee refused requests by the Ray brothers and Carol Pepper that their testimony be taken in open session, and shortly after his closed-door testimony, John Ray found himself back behind bars, his parole revoked at the request of Blakey, who had accused him of possible perjury.

But the most self-destructive stratagem allegedly involved subornation of perjury, receipt of stolen property and the monitoring and tape-recording of phone calls by an undercover agent, reportedly in the employ of the committee.

The agent's name was Oliver Patterson, a self-identified former informer for the FBI. According to Mark Lane, Patterson, along with committee investigators "and their agents," stole copies of letters between the Ray brothers, monitored and tape-recorded telephone conversations with them, and, in one particularly sleazy bit of business, were instructed to disclose scurrilous information to the *New York Times* about Lane's sex life. Blakey, obviously shaken by Lane's charges, which came on the eve of the hearings, called them "serious" and promised to investigate.

True or not, Lane's allegations, along with Blakey's own behavior, are bound to cast a pall on the hearings, which are scheduled to last another six weeks or more. Blakey has been counting on the hearings to go well, and weeks before they started, he reportedly was calling the executives of the various television networks, urging them to provide coverage. It is his moment in the spotlight, and he has rehearsed it carefully. A lot is riding on these hearings for G. Robert Blakey. More than one source who has come in contact with him lately gets the impression that, when the investigation is wrapped up, he would very much like a senior job in the Justice Department. A good performance could be a stepping stone.

What the hearings will do for the establishment of truth is something else. So poisoned has the atmosphere become from months of bitterness that whatever conclusions the committee comes up with will be suspect. And that is sad—for whatever its sins and omissions, the committee's field investigators have uncovered much that was never known about both murders. One source talks wistfully about "dozens of leads" into a possible conspiracy to kill Kennedy—leads which, like so much about the Kennedy and King murders, will now go aglimmering. ●

ADDENDUM & ERRATUM

Kucinich Beats The Odds. When last we reported on the fortunes of Dennis Kucinich, Cleveland's embattled mayor faced a recall election and seemed headed out the door. He had angered voters with a series of strange moves, such as firing a police chief he had appointed only 100 days earlier. ("Dennis, the Menacing Mayor of Cleveland," *NT*, 5/1/78)

Well, Cleveland will have Dennis Kucinich to kick around a while longer. He survived the August 13 recall election by a slender 275 votes (out of more than 120,000 ballots cast)—and then grandly proclaimed his squeaker "a victory for those poor and working people who knew they had a government they could call their own."

Accidental Anonymity. We owe Jeff Wheelwright an apology. He wrote the story "Let Them Eat Heptachlor" that appeared last issue as a sidebar to the feature on diatomaceous earth. We won't forget to pay Wheelwright, but we did forget to print his byline.

Meanwhile, In The Atlantic . . . While Dennis Kucinich was vanquishing his opponents, Diana Nyad was losing to hers: a choppy sea, stinging jellyfish and a mysterious swelling of her lips and tongue. She had set off from Ortejaso, Cuba, on August 13, hoping to complete the difficult swim to Florida in about 65 hours ("Diana Nyad's Magnificent Obsession," *NT*, 6/26/78). But two days later an exhausted and discouraged Nyad had to give up, 85 miles short of Key West.

Kids and Angel Dust. In his story "Angel Death" (*NT*, 3/20/78), Peter Koper reported on the dangers of PCP, a drug sold on the streets under a variety of names (Angel Dust, Parsley, Killer Weed, Rocket Fuel, Goon, etc.). Koper also reported that the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the federal agency responsible for drug treatment and research, "has been asleep at the wheel" when it comes to studying the use of PCP.

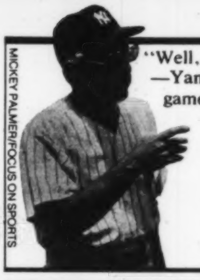
Now NIDA may be waking up; it has just released startling figures on PCP use among the young. NIDA estimates that 14 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 25 have used PCP once or more, and that usage in that age group increased by 46 percent from 1976 to 1977.

Over the same period, PCP use among 12- to 17-year-olds doubled. "That's a large enough increase that it's not just a statistical artifact," says Dr. Robert C. Petersen, assistant director of NIDA's research division. "I can't say that LSD use never doubled in a year, but I doubt it. But if it had, it would not have occurred in the group of very young kids."

Rolling Thunder. Last summer we told you of the joys and hazards of skateboarding ("Skateboard Fever!" *NT*, 7/22/77). Now there's more to report—on the hazards, at least. The last year has seen an enormous, if predictable, rise in the number of injuries associated with skateboards. The National Injury Information Clearinghouse estimates that 140,070 skateboard-related injuries occurred in 1977, compared with 27,522 in 1975 and only 3,682 in 1973. All of this has moved skateboards into 7th place on the Consumer Product Hazard List, up from 18th place last year. (Bicycles head the list, followed, Gerald Ford might be relieved to hear, by stairs.)

How Rapists Avoid Jail. In "The Berkeley Rapist" (*NT*, 5/18/78), Lacey Fosburgh wrote that there were more than 56,000 reported cases of rape in 1976, with experts predicting that figures for 1977 would show a 10-percent increase. Now there is a study estimating that those 56,000 cases represent only about 22 percent of the 250,000 rapes committed in the U.S. every year.

The two-year study, sponsored by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, also reports that arrests occur in only 25 percent of the cases where rape is reported; that only one complaint in 60 results in a conviction; and that prosecutors are hesitant to file rape charges because the low conviction rate means such cases are "not good for one's career." ●



MICKEY PALMER/FOCUS ON SPORTS

"Well, that kind of puts the damper on even a Yankee win."
—Yankee broadcaster Phil Rizzuto, after telecast of the Yankees/Orioles game resumed following a bulletin from the studio that Pope Paul had died.

The Insider

Father knows best

Brown Faces Embarassing Family Tie to Planned LNG Facility

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Indians: Family guests?

Worried about his anti-business image in an election year, Jerry Brown is abandoning environmentalism to jump on the corporate bulldozer. Enlisting the support of top aide Richard Silberman, the one-time Jack in the Box hamburger chain executive, Brown has thrown his weight behind plans by two California utilities to build a massive liquified natural gas (LNG) terminal near Point Conception, one of the last unspoiled spots on the Southern California Coast.

Informed sources say that the junior Brown and Silberman played a major behind-the-scenes role in winning recent approval from the state Public Utility Commission (PUC) for the proposed LNG site. The decision was made despite strenuous objections from some of the administration's own appointees at the state Coastal Commission who worry about the environmental and seismic dangers of the massive $500 million facility.

"They said this year is an election year and we'd better watch what we're doing," one source close to the PUC commissioners told *New Times*. "Yes, there was pressure, and there was pressure from all the way up."

The governor's latest role change, however, could prove very embarrassing as opposition to the Santa Barbara County site grows. Already a handful of Indian militants, who claim Point Conception as their mythic western gate for souls, have occupied the site and are unlikely to be removed without some violence.

Even worse Brown's own family is intricately involved in the LNG scheme. His father is a business partner of Pertamina, the Indonesian firm that will be a major supplier for the new facility. And Papa Brown's law firm in 1976 and 1977 received some $43,000 in legal fees from a subsidiary of Pacific Lighting, one of the LNG scheme's principal partners, for advising them how to steer the site through the state government.

While the LNG interests swear Brown senior did nothing to aide the negotiations with Pertamina, the Indonesian gas cartel, or intervene with his son's administration, Pacific Lighting's Political Assistance Committee has itself helped out junior with a $2,000 contribution for his aborted 1976 presidential campaign. And Perta Oil Marketing Corporation, of which Daddy is a major stockholder, sunk at least $21,000 into the kid's original 1974 gubernatorial race. Brown senior's law firm also chipped in an additional $4,500.

"The governor's certainly pushed hard for this thing, more than anything else," complains George Allen, attorney for local residents fighting the LNG facility. "I don't know much about that Pertamina stuff, but that it all smells and that his family is deep, deep into it." *—Paul Grabowicz and Joel Kotkin*

Smokers hack

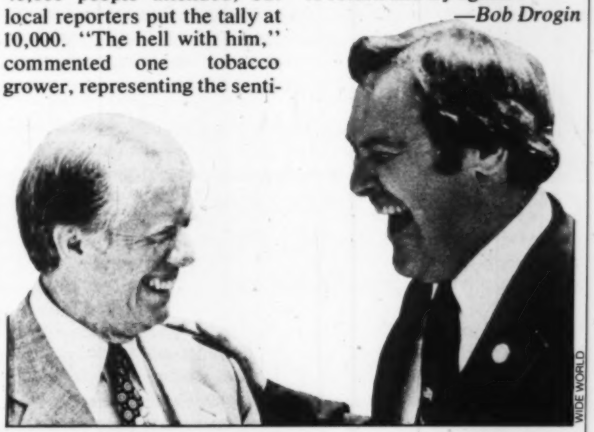
Carter Handicaps Home Team

There were a few hitches to Jimmy Carter's August 5, whirlwind tour of Wilson, North Carolina, to campaign for Democratic candidate John Ingram in an uphill battle against Republican right-wing incumbent Sen. Jesse Helms.

State Democratic leaders figured it would cost $6,000 to $7,000 for Carter's three-hour stop. And Ingram, who had only $3,000 in his war chest when he filed federal campaign papers last July, was reportedly disturbed that the President had come to spend money, not raise it. Charlie Webb, Ingram's campaign manager, guesses the trip was "a shot in the arm" even if he doesn't know how to pay for it.

Then there was the problem of Carter attracting a crowd in the heart of tobacco growing country, while HEW secretary Joseph Califano tours the nation chanting anti-smoking slogans. "We called everyone in the Wilson County [pop. 65,000] phone book as well as all the surrounding counties," said Wilson County Democratic Chairman Doug Whitley, "We gave out more than 50,000 leaflets and put up banners. . . . We never had a President here before." Charlie Webb thinks 40,000 people attended, but local reporters put the tally at 10,000. "The hell with him," commented one tobacco grower, representing the sentiments of many.

Ingram's worries aren't over yet. Carter has promised to return and try again. *—Bob Drogin*



WIDE WORLD

Ingram: Thanks but no thanks

Bombs awry

Blue Ice Fallout Devastates Denver

ED MAKER/DENVER POST

Local newspapers have called them "careless and deadly droppings." A representative from the Federal Aviation Administration calls them, "accidental ice deliveries." And nobody has done anything about them.

Blue ice forms when a leak develops in an airplane's plumbing system—usually human waste treated with a blue chemical. The liquid collects and freezes on the outside of the plane and then during descent to warmer altitudes, has a tendency to break off and drop through the roofs of unsuspecting homeowners. Since the bombs, which weigh 30 to 100 pounds, were first reported five years ago, there have been eight incidents in the Denver area and several more scattered across the U.S.

Lou Lombard, of the FAA, speculates that the bombs fall more often in Denver because the path from the West Coast to Denver requires flying over the Rocky Mountains and then making an abrupt descent over heavily populated areas.

One Kentucky farmer who was graced with an accidental ice delivery in his home, was particularly dismayed to hear of its contents after taking a big lick of the gargantuan popsicle.

The last Denver victims were the Cornwells, whose condominium was hit by a 40- to 50-pound ice bomb which left a foot-wide hole in their roof. The ice missed Mr. Cornwell, who was sitting in the room where the bomb landed, but his wife said she is convinced that he might have been killed.

Lombard agrees. "The law of averages says it can happen eventually. And when it does," he says, "two congressmen will get involved and they'll get a law passed."

Since the first bombings, the FAA has asked the airlines to check their aircraft for leaks, but Lombard says the agency can't police every plane. The FAA is thinking about solutions like antifreeze in the tanks, but until then, Chicken Little has been vindicated.—*Sandy Widener*

Widows denied

Kentucky Coal Judge Mining His Own Backyard

Like hundreds of other eastern Kentucky farmers who found coal seams on their land, H. David Hermansdorfer found he could make a few extra bucks by leasing out mining rights. But Hermansdorfer is no ordinary farmer. He's a federal judge and he regularly hears cases involving every aspect of the coal industry. In fact, he presided over the lawsuits arising out of the last two major mine disasters in Kentucky. None of the 53 survivors of the mine explosions received more than workman's compensation and social security after a hearing in Hermansdorfer's courtroom.

A coal operator has been strip mining on and around the judge's land outside of Ashland, Kentucky, for the last four years. Hermansdorfer claims he doesn't know how much he's made from the venture, and the non-UMW coal company isn't talking, but a source close to the judge says that royalties for the coal amounted to $2,000 in 1977 (at about $1 per ton), when the seam yielded much less than in previous years.

While the judge has made very little compared to the overnight millionaires that are legend in coal-laced Kentucky, the possibilities of a conflict of interest—not to mention an indication of personal bias—are real, especially in a society that rigidly segregates coal owners from coal workers. Federal officials were surprised to hear of Hermansdorfer's interests and must be wondering what to do about the almost 3,000 mine-safety cases now pending in the eastern Kentucky district court where the judge sits. Showing little love for federal mining officials, he recently condemned the officials and their report on the 1976 Scotia Coal Mine disaster, as biased.

As to the conflict of interest, it's best to quote the federal judge himself: After recently deciding a case involving the agency designated to protect the health and safety of the nation's coal miners, Hermansdorfer said, "I think it's very important when an agency of the United States deals with the public that they be like Caesar's wife, not only above reproach, but giving the appearance of being above reproach." A lesson he has yet to learn. —*Bill Bishop*

Tests fail

Hoffa Associate Buries Prosecutor

When Jimmy Hoffa disappeared in Oakland County, Michigan, the residents began digging holes in search of the old man's skeletal remains. They found nothing. Recently local county prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson arrested Louis Linteau, a close friend and former business partner of Hoffa's, and found himself stuck in a hole of his own.

Linteau, the last person known to have seen Hoffa alive, was arrested for conspiracy to commit bodily harm to a man dating his girlfriend. He allegedly asked a police undercover agent to break the gentleman's arm. But Linteau had a surprise for Patterson. He brought back the ghost of Jimmy Hoffa and sent the man, who has a reputation for busting organized crime figures, scurrying for lie detector tests.

WIDE WORLD

Linteau: Arm twister

Linteau swears he personally handed Patterson an illegal $2,500 cash advance on a $10,000 donation from Hoffa for Patterson's 1972 Oakland County prosecutor campaign. Patterson vehemently denied the charge and, only days before he unsuccessfully challenged U.S. Senator Robert Griffin in a Republican primary, he passed two polygraph exams. That sent Linteau straight to the local police station where he *also* passed a polygraph attesting to his story.

Only Jimmy Hoffa knows for sure. —*Ira Rosen*

Officials left holding the bag

American Escapee from Penal Colony Leaves Turks Climbing Walls

A new motion picture, portraying an American's survival in the hell of a Turkish prison, has become embroiled in international diplomacy and threatens a new treaty between the U.S. and Turkey.

"Midnight Express" is based on the actual experiences of Billy Hayes from Babylon, New York, who was arrested in Istanbul in 1970 and convicted of possession of two kilos of hashish (American street value—$3,000). Hayes was first sentenced to four years of what Amnesty International, winner of last year's Nobel Peace Prize, describes as "torture and bestiality" in the Turkish penal colony at Sagamilcar. Fifty-three days before his scheduled release, a Turkish appeals court extended Hayes' term to life imprisonment.

Hayes managed to escape and tell his story. "Midnight Express" reveals the inhumanity in a prison which one Amnesty International expert says makes a Mexican jail "look like a Holiday Inn." On May 18, 1978, the film was shown at the Cannes Film Festival (it is British-made but produced by Peter Guber, an American) and received high critical acclaim. The Turks were furious, citing a Cannes rule stating that "no film will be screened that may offend another country's political sensitivities."

On May 23, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs released, through its embassies worldwide, a protest statement designed to discredit the film and urge other nations to prevent it from being shown. The Turkish document, which erroneously describes Hayes as carrying 20 kilos (instead of the two he was actually charged with), mysteriously appeared on the desks of several London journalists following the film's world premier in London on August 9. It also charges Hayes with smuggling, a more serious crime than possession which he was, in fact, convicted of initially. The release goes on to inaccurately state that Hayes was originally sentenced to life.

Secret negotiations have been underway between State Department officials and the Turkish Foreign Ministry for a prisoner transfer treaty similar to the pacts agreed upon between the U.S. and Mexico and the U.S. and Canada. American negotiators are meeting in Ankara this week, according to Roy Davis of the Bureau of Consular Affairs in Washington, to discuss details for a treaty.

American and Turkish sources in London, however, claim that the film could jeopardize the negotiations. "The Turks are ninety-nine percent temperament and one percent politics," says one State Department official close to the situation, "They are mad as hell over not only the film but an American barnstorming the world talking about their prison system."

Hayes was considering a visit to West Germany after England and prior to the film's American debut in October. But U.S. officials cautioned him about the German–Turkish extradition treaty which permits the return of fugitives. Hayes canceled the proposed trip to Hamburg.

While treaty talks continue, American theaters are gearing up for "Midnight Express." However, film distributors report that in Latin America and some parts of Asia it's doubtful "Midnight Express" will ever reach the screens because of continued Turkish protest and a sensitivity toward flak about human rights violations which may well hit home. •

Brad Davis as Hayes: Pointing the way

Pink journalism, off color

Boston Archbishop Involved in Hit-and-Run Case

Hellzapoppin among the Boston media. A story in the current issue of *Boston* magazine headlined "The Cardinal," falls just short of lynching the city's Archbishop, Humberto Cardinal Medeiros.

Written by Boston *Herald American* columnist Jim Delay, under the pseudonym Nick Phillips, the article describes Cardinal Medeiros' appearance as "pink and juicy like a Colonial ham." Delay's boss at the *Herald American*, editor William McIlwain, was furious when he learned that Delay had written the piece. Invoking a rule which forbids columnists to write for outside publications, he promptly fired Delay.

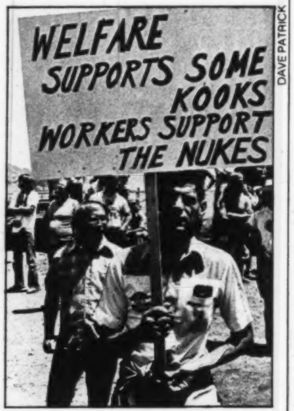
The story paints a picture of Medeiros as a man more concerned with his manicure than with his mission as a spiritual leader. In a style which defies any easy journalistic definition, the author goes so far as to describe an imaginary incident in which Medeiros orders his chauffeur to run over a young man. One section is called "The Cardinal Medeiros Joke Book." A sample: "Q. Why does Cardinal Medeiros carry pudding in his wallet? A: For identification."

Medeiros: A ham?

To put it mildly, the piece has attracted more attention than most *Boston* stories. "Over 400 calls and letters have come in so far," says editor George Gendron. "I've never seen anything like it in my life." That's precisely the attitude of most callers, many of whom canceled their subscriptions. Sources inside the magazine say that advertisers are so enraged that they are also threatening to withdraw from the magazine. At least for the time being *Boston* magazine will not be as Delay describes Medeiros, "soundless like a disconnected telephone." •

No longhairs need apply

Diablo Demonstration Reveals Missing Link in Anti-Nuke Movement



DAVE PATRICK

Although hailed by its organizers as a dramatic success, the occupation of California's Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant August 6 and 7 also revealed a severe, and perhaps fatal, flaw in California's anti-nuclear movement—the inability to move beyond its predominantly young and hip constituency and attract significant support from the state's middle and working classes.

Drawing heavily on California's countercultural havens in Santa Barbara, Berkeley and Santa Cruz, the Diablo Canyon protest drew thousands of young demonstrators and made headlines all over the state when 497 activists were arrested for trespassing on the power plant site. But in the small coastal town of San Luis Obispo, which hosts the reactor, the majority of the local residents looked with indifference or open contempt at the protest. For many, it was an "invasion by outsiders" trying to thwart progress and destroy the economic boom the plant offered their community.

"I don't appreciate people coming from out of town to tell me how to live," complained Bruce Schmidt, a 27-year-old electrician at Diablo Canyon, who has lived in San Luis most of his life. "It's the working people against the younger people," he grumbled. "It's not their livelihood."

Schmidt's sentiments were echoed by dozens of residents of San Luis who, only two years ago, voted two to one against a proposed statewide moratorium on nuclear power plants. "There are groups that want to keep the environment unchanged and keep technology unprogressive," charged E.J. "Jack" Fabbri, a local San Luis businessperson. "They still want to live in tents, eat naturally and live like prehistoric men."

The hostility of the town's people weighs heavily on the minds of most anti-nuclear activists, some of whom agree that they will have to expand their current base of support or face extinction. "You have to have the support of the people," declared Harold Miossi, former head of the local Sierra Club and a long time opponent of nuclear power. Miossi, who himself declined to participate in the weekend demonstration at Diablo, is fearful such protests may only further alienate California's middle and working classes.

"Although it does seem to get the attention of the media," he said of the protest, "I have to question the tactics they use."

—Paul Grabowicz and Joel Kotkin

Power play

Private Cop and Congress Do Not See Eye to Eye

The publisher of a new monthly newsletter, designed to help corporate biggies keep tabs on members of the "counter-corporate culture," is headed for a run-in with Congress. *Business Conflicts Report*, published by Research West, a California detective firm, first appeared last month after the company's files on the anti-nuclear movement were subpoenaed by Rep. John Moss' (D.-Calif.) Oversight and Investigations committee during its probe of spying and harassment by large power companies.

Research West refused to comply with the subpoena, claiming that its dossiers on anti-nukeites were the product of "investigative reporting" done under contract for the Georgia Power and Pacific Gas and Electric companies, and thus shielded by the First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of the press. The Moss committee rejected their argument and voted to hold the detective firm in contempt.

If the entire House upholds the committee, Research West's president, Patricia Atthowe, could wind up spending a year in jail and paying a $5,000 fine and the firm could lose its California investigator's license. Atthowe's strategy is to publish a bona fide newsletter that shores up the detective agency's feeble claim to journalistic privilege. If that fails, the newsletter would offer Research West something to fall back on.

"Research West has been so successful in its studies of the anti-business sector," one leaflet pitching *Business Conflicts Report* brags, "that the Congressional Oversight Committee of Rep. John Moss tried this year to put it out of business."

— Bill Wallace

Snap, crackle, pop

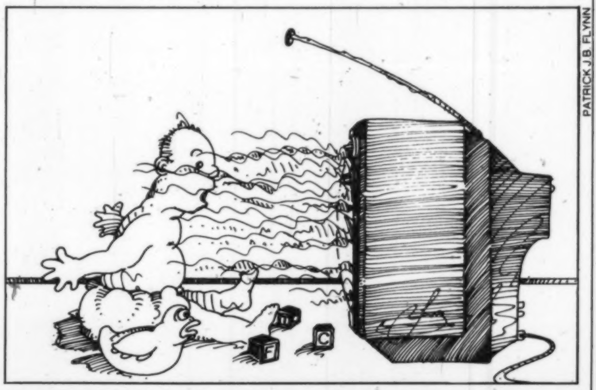
The Million Dollar Baby Battle

In what promises to be an intensive campaign, representatives of the advertising, broadcasting, cereal, grocery and toy industries have been gearing up to combat an FTC report recommending a ban on all televised advertising to children under 8 years old and restrictions on ads for highly sugared foods for children under 12 years old.

The offensive will strike at several controversial points contained in the FTC report. The cereal manufacturers will focus on health issues, particularly the FTC's contention that pre-sweetened cereals promote cavities among children. Lawyers for the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) will attack the proposed restrictions as an abridgment of First Amendment freedoms. Advertising experts will extol the benefits children gain from watching television commercials.

And, Burson-Marsteller, the nation's second-largest PR firm (INSIDER—June 12) has a one-year contract to peddle the industries' views to the public. According to Tracy Westen, deputy director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, the industry groups have amassed a $2 million "war chest" to fight the advertising ban—a claim denied by the NAB. Whether or not any such fund formally exists, it is unlikely that the legal and promotional talent culled by the affected groups could be had for much less.

—Michael Massing



PATRICK J.B. FLYNN

YOU GET MORE THAN YOUR MONEY'S WORTH AT TOYOTA. ONE EXAMPLE, THE COROLLA SR-5 LIFTBACK.

More durability. Corollas aren't bolted together like some vehicles. They're built with welded unitized body construction. You'll notice this "tightness" when you examine a Toyota, drive a Toyota and own a Toyota.

More dependability. This year, for the first time—the Toyota Corolla line is equipped with fully transistorized ignition. It's designed to start when an ordinary "points/condensor" system could give you trouble.

More confidence. That's what we build every day. For more and more people discover why we can say, "If you can find a better built small car than Toyota... buy it." And more people are buying Toyotas, finding out that Toyotas are built better than they thought possible.

More 5-speeds. Toyota offers more models with 5-speed overdrive transmission than any other manufacturer. Another example of traditional Toyota operating economy.

More convenience. The SR-5 Liftback shown not only has more versatility than a sedan, but also features a special split, fold-down rear seat.

GET MORE NOW.

COROLLA
SR5

[illegible] fuel economy. The Toyota [illegible] SR-5 Liftback's combined EPA [illegible] is 32 mpg—14 miles per gallon [illegible] than the national fleet standard for all [illegible]. In 1978 EPA tests the Corolla SR-5 is rated at 38 mpg highway, 28 mpg city. These 1978 EPA ratings are estimates. Your mileage will vary depending on your driving habits and your car's condition and equipment. California ratings will be lower.

More selection. The Corolla pictured here is only one of 29 different Toyota vehicles—no other import manufacturer offers more.

More brake power. Power assisted front disc brakes fight the enemy of all brakes... heat. And they resist fade. That's why they are standard on every Toyota.

YOU GOT IT.

More now. Right now. We can't tell you when, but all prices will probably go up including car prices. So if you're thinking about buying a new car, think about buying a Toyota now. There will probably never be a better time. And when you buy a Toyota now, you'll find out what real satisfaction is.

TOYOTA

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Insex is best

Cupid Drops Arrows to Swing on Red Star

"The Bugs" is not a sequel to the summertime movie *The Swarm*, but a new Soviet strategy for jungle warfare.

A substance called pheromone apparently controls the sex drives and related behavior of insects through odor dispersal. So the Soviets seized the opportunity to manipulate the over-sexed African aedes mosquitos as an offensive weapon. The insects do not attempt to breed with anything other than their own kind, but they get so excited that the resulting winged orgy could disrupt infantry operations.

A Defense Intelligence Agency report called "Soviet and Czechoslovakian Parapsychology Research" states the case. "One can use a pheromone or other odor producing agents to create a condition that will cause insects, for example, to gather to a specific location, e.g. on an enemy camp. Another pheromone could be released that could cause aggressive behavior in the insects, this in turn would disrupt the military unit and render them ineffective."

U.S. military sources deny that any such research is being done in this country, but acknowledge that a number of U.S. universities are working on the love potion for peaceful purposes. What could they mean by that? Well, the report also states that the Soviets are attempting to use pheromones to control behavior in humans. What a way to end a war. *—Ira Rosen*

STEPHEN DALTON/PHOTO RESEARCHERS

Love at first sight

Promises, promises

Senators Stop the Music on Carter Whistling a Different Tune

UPI

Abourezk blows the whistle

Candidate Jimmy Carter, the outsider, was vociferous on the need to protect government whistleblowers. He was especially critical of the treatment accorded Ernie Fitzgerald, the Pentagon employee dismissed in 1969 for exposing a $2 billion cost overrun in construction of the C5A transport plane—a revelation which threatened the Lockheed bailout. Fitzgerald, who won back a Pentagon position after years of legal wrangling, now looks into such things as food service costs for mess halls and the construction of bowling alleys in Thailand. "I'm kept busy," he says, "but I know my career has reached dead end."

President Carter apparently sees things differently now that he's on the inside. When his Civil Service Reform package arrived in Congress, noticeably missing was any provision to protect those who reveal federal waste and mismanagement. It condoned disclosure only of violations of laws, rules and regulations. Carter's retreat on whistleblowing came as no surprise to those following the Justice Department's feverish prosecution of Frank Snepp, the former CIA agent whose book, *Decent Interval*, disclosed the CIA's disgraceful role in the events surrounding the evacuation of Vietnam, but revealed no classified information.

Taking note of the President's oversight in the Civil Service Reform Act were Senators James Abourezk (D.-N.D.) and Abraham Ribicoff (D.-Conn.) who insisted on amendments to protect those who expose government waste and mismanagment. The President, realizing his vulnerability as a candidate for re-election, decided not to oppose the changes. Carter's flip-flopping on the issue of whistleblowing seems to stem from the differences between Carter-the-candidate and Carter-in-the-White House. *—Dorothy J. Samuels*

The leaning tower of United Power

Minnesota Utilities Go Underground, Planting the Seeds of Paranoia

In spite of a 300-person security force hired by two Minnesota power companies, protesters in Stearns and Pope Counties managed to knock down three 150-foot towers built to carry electricity from Underwood, North Dakota, to Delano, Minnesota, earlier this month. The ±400 kilovolt power line has been the cause of protests since 1974, when area farmers first questioned the right of the Cooperative Power Association and the United Power Association to run the line across their land (INSIDER—Feb. 6).

PAUL SHAMBROOM

Power tower bites the dust

The towers were toppled by loosening bolts that held the four legs to a concrete base, and officials guess that a hydraulic jack may have been used to push them over. Damage to one tower was estimated at $80,000, including the cost of rewiring transmission and conductor cables.

The power companies, which paid over $685,000 for a four-month security contract, added some spook-style touches recently when they hired Darrell Mulroy, a six-foot six-inch, 265-pound private detective who then posed as a reporter for the *National Enquirer*. Mulroy, his cover blown, explained that his job was "to plant the seeds of paranoia," among protestors. His methods included rummaging through their garbage, parking outside their homes and tailing them.

Following the accidental death of a line worker who fell from one of the towers, Mulroy distributed a fake protest newsletter. It read in part, "Thank you to whoever assisted the struggle by tampering with tower 1180. Your work helped to show that the people will not remain passive." Mulroy's intention was to incite workers against the protestors. "I know what spooks people—what keeps them away from power lines," he said.

—Tony Schmitz

The difference between these cassette decks isn't sound.

There's hardly an audio enthusiast alive who doesn't admire the Nakamichi 1000II.

But at $1,650,* admiring it is about all most people can do.

That's why Pioneer created the new CT-F1000. A cassette deck that offers all the features and performance of the Nakamichi 1000II, but costs almost $1,000 less.

(We realize this is hard to believe, but be patient. The facts bear us out.)

It's a fact that the $600* Pioneer CT-F1000 and the $1,650 Nakamichi 1000II are both honest three headed cassette decks that let you monitor right off the tape as you record.

Both feature separate Dolby systems for the playback and recording heads. So when you're recording with the Dolby on, you can monitor the same way.

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It's value.

The Nakamichi 1000II: $1,650

The Pioneer CT-F1000: $600

The comparison holds up equally well when it comes to performance.

The CT-F1000 and the Nakamichi 1000II both have total harmonic distortion levels of less than 1.5%.

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And both have signal to noise ratios that are so similar only sophisticated laboratory equipment can tell them apart.

If the incredible value of the CT-F1000 still sounds a bit hard to believe, we suggest you go hear it for yourself at any Pioneer dealer.

Our viewpoint is simple: if you can't hear the difference, why pay the difference?

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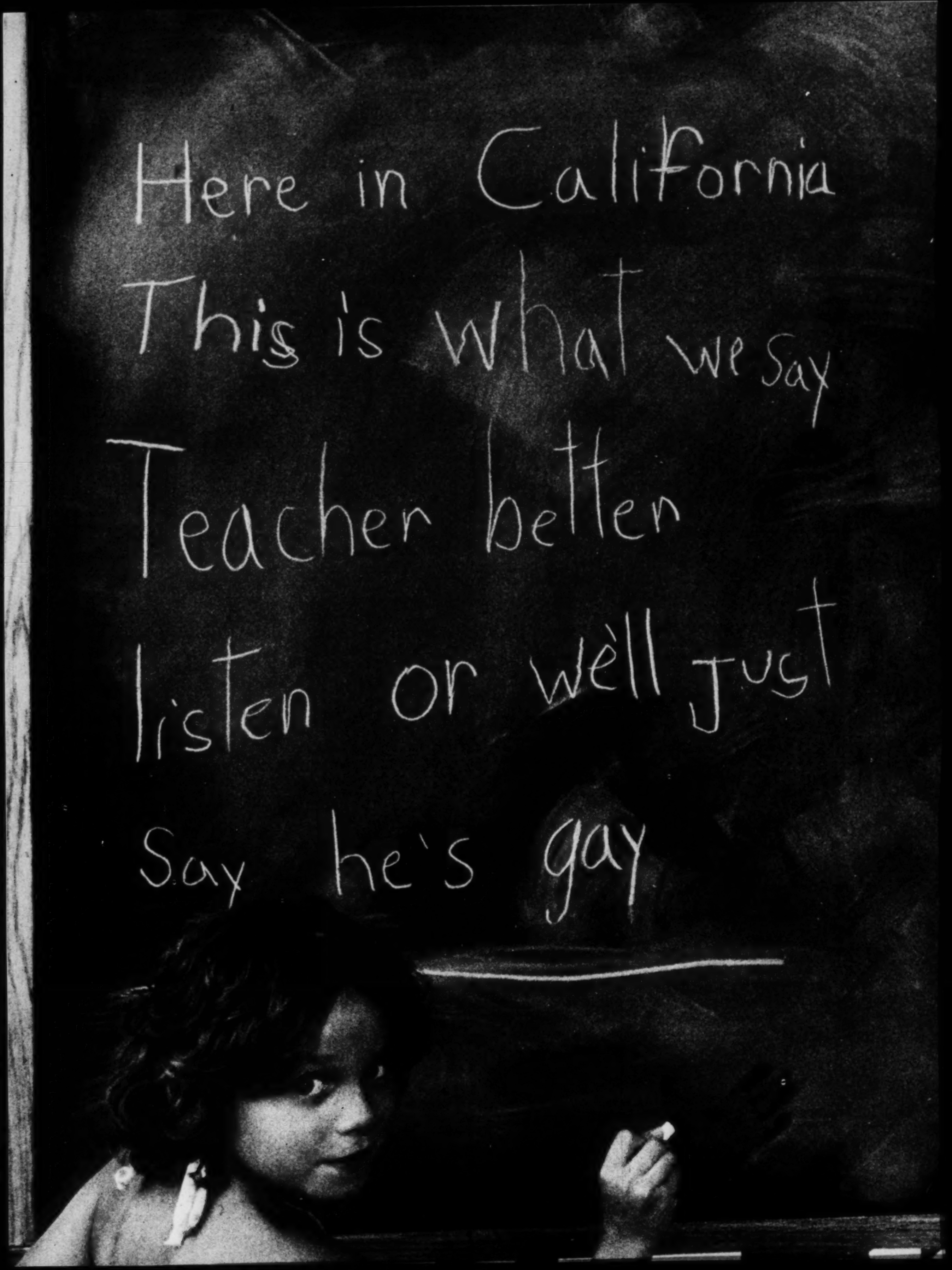

Here in California
This is what we say
Teacher better
listen or we'll just
Say he's gay

NewTimes

Gay-baiting in the Classroom

Sexual politics in California

As a campaign headquarters, it is almost the very clone of a hundred others where political activists have gathered to push candidates and causes over the past decade. There are linoleum floors, papier-mâché partitions dividing the cubicles, a coffee machine and a hand-lettered sign atop the storefront: "NO ON PROP. 6." At one phone, David Mixner, co-author of the 1968 McCarthy insurgency, leader of the Vietnam Moratorium and, at 23, the youngest member of the McGovern Commission which wrote the Democratic Party's reform rules, does what he's done so often before—figure out how to raise campaign cash. "What about Hal Holbrook doing Mark Twain for $25 a seat at Ford's Theatre?" he asks. "How do we get to Bill Douglas?" At another desk a press secretary is writing releases, and in an open bullpen area, volunteers stuff, seal and stamp endless reams of envelopes. But it is a campaign headquarters with a difference.

"One difference is that in this campaign, decorating the headquarters is a major undertaking," says Mike Levett, its Southern California coordinator, who's spent half his 34 years in and around politics. "We sent two volunteers to pick up a desk and they came back without it. They said it wasn't nice enough." The two volunteers were gay, as are most of the people in the headquarters—and understandably so. The proposition that they are struggling to defeat—"PROP. 6"—is California's equivalent of Anita Bryant's homophobic crusade.

Proposition 6, which will be on the statewide ballot this November, would force local officials to bar not only gay teachers but possibly *any* teacher who defends the right of others to be gay. "It is, if you'll pardon the expression, a pain in the ass," says a state assemblyman from South-

by Robert Shrum

Photograph by John E. Barrett

So's your old man: Briggs (without nail polish) and constituent deliberate the merits of Proposition 6

ern California, a liberal who wants to be against Proposition 6 but worries about his constituents' reaction. He wishes "it just wasn't there" and predicts that it could overshadow all the candidates this fall, even Jerry Brown. "It could be the next Proposition 13."

Indeed, California's anti-gay campaign is encouraging precisely that comparison. Its latest fund-raising letter, crafted by Butcher-Forde, the political consultants for Howard Jarvis' anti-property-tax crusade, reminds half a million voters: "The rest of the country looks to California in everything from hair styles to tax reform." After noting the national reverberations from Proposition 13, the letter argues: "In November, our fellow Americans will be watching us again, and we're going to offer them a New Idea. We're going to show them that morality is back in style."

Given the recent history of gay rights referendums, opponents of Proposition 6 cannot afford to take such appeals lightly. California may be the first frontier for new lifestyles, and sometimes it is politically very liberal. But Eugene, Oregon, is a university town in a consistently liberal state—and gays lost a referendum there this year nearly 2 to 1.

There may, however, be a saving distinction between the California proposition and similar measures elsewhere. Voters in Eugene, Dade County, Witchita and St. Paul have repealed ordinances that established new protections in housing and employment for gays. California has no such statute. Proposition 6—called the Briggs Initiative after its sponsor, Orange County State Senator John Briggs—would *require* discrimination in hiring and firing public school employees on the basis of "public homosexual activity" that might come to the attention of children or employees.

Sol Madfes, executive director of the United Administrators of the San Francisco school district, says: "The Briggs Initiative would leave teachers in the position of being accused—and then having to prove their innocence." Anyone, including a disgruntled student, could complain to a school board that a teacher was gay. Madfes, who for 40 years was a teacher and a high school principal, warns: "The board or the superintendent will listen when a parent starts yelling. The attitude is—where there's smoke, there's fire. Under Briggs, the opportunity would be there to crucify somebody by accusation."

One frightened teacher from a conservative L.A. suburb has become a volunteer for the NO-ON-6 effort because of what happened to a straight colleague last year: "It was after Anita Bryant got started. The parents of one child didn't like his teacher, so they charged that he was homosexual. The school board didn't find any proof except what the child said. At the elementary level, teachers usually are physically affectionate with students—they tousle their hair, they hug them. The parents threatened to take it to court; the teacher was under pressure—so he quit teaching. I think that could happen all the time if Briggs passed. As a straight teacher, I would have to think twice, if a child were upset, about holding her or putting her on my lap."

Teachers, straight or gay, could lose their jobs for expressing an opinion, outside the classroom and on their own time, favoring tolerance for homosexuality. Mary Vail, president of the Barristers Club of San Francisco, an organization of young establishment lawyers, regards Proposition 6 as "a major threat to civil liberties." She lists some of the activities that could become pretexts for witch hunting in the teaching profession: "Having a drink in a gay bar, participating in a gay rights rally, assigning readings from books written by gay authors, attending a community meeting where gay rights are discussed—all could give rise to dismissal."

> **"I may not look much like Howard Jarvis, but I'm willing to sound like him for the duration"**

Vail and her colleagues argue that Proposition 6 "sets a dangerous precedent." A teachers' union official believes that the Briggs Initiative is McCarthyism revisited: "After the teachers, it

Photograph: Wide World

could be firemen, policemen, all civil servants."

Senator Briggs contends that "teachers are different" in that they have a unique proximity to children and special influence over them. Yet the California State Education Code already provides for the dismissal of teachers who proposition or proselytize students sexually. The State Department of Education assesses the current law as "sufficient to protect pupils from sexual advances by teachers, whether homosexual or heterosexual, and to prevent teachers from promoting their sexual lifestyle or preference in the classroom."

The fact is that Briggs' initiative was not a legal necessity but a political one. John Briggs wanted the 1978 Republican nomination for governor. He was rock-bottom in the polls and he needed an issue to climb on.

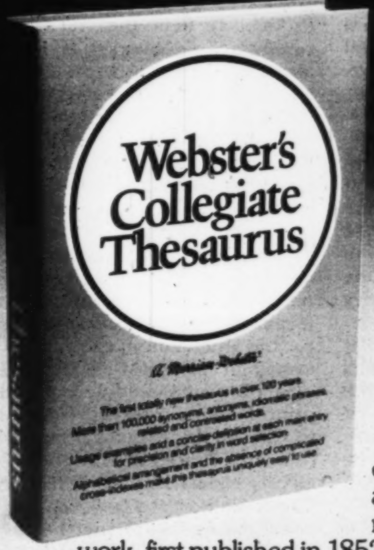
Politicians and the press had never taken Briggs seriously as a potential governor, or even as a state legislator. Once when he was still in the Assembly, a Briggs outburst accusing Speaker Leo McCarthy of persecuting him prompted the Speaker to send each of the 80 assemblypersons a bag of Queeg balls to memorialize the event.

Briggs recalled that "Reagan was going down the tubes in 1976 until he came up with Panama as an issue." So Briggs came up with his own issue, "the homosexual issue," rating it "the hottest social issue since Reconstruction." Originally, he had hoped to run with his initiative in the June 1978 primary. He began collecting signatures 10 months before; he needed some 312,000 by December 1, 1977. A month before the deadline, more than enough signatures had been collected. All were for naught, however; Briggs had omitted from his petitions a phrase from the state attorney general's required summary of the initiative. As a result, the initiative was disqualified from the June ballot.

Briggs decided to start all over, this time obtaining signatures so as to get the measure on the November ballot; the process, he figured, could be a highly visible part of his gubernatorial campaign. For political good measure, he added a second initiative, one to increase the number of crimes punishable by death. This double-barreled strategy, Briggs calculated, could multiply his otherwise paltry publicity. He called a press conference and proudly displayed stacks of petitions in favor of the death penalty and Proposition 6.

In terms of his own candidacy, none of it did any good. He withdrew as a candidate for governor five weeks before the primary, with every poll showing him a distant, hopeless fourth. But by then, at a cost of $850,000, his petition against gay teachers had gathered over half a million signatures, nearly 200,000 more than the minimum neces-

From Merriam-Webster, the first totally new Thesaurus in 120 years.



Thesauruses have not changed significantly for over a century; most are merely rearrangements of Roget's work, first published in 1852. But now comes <u>Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus</u>. As soon as you look at one page, you'll know the difference. It's as fast and easy to use as a dictionary.

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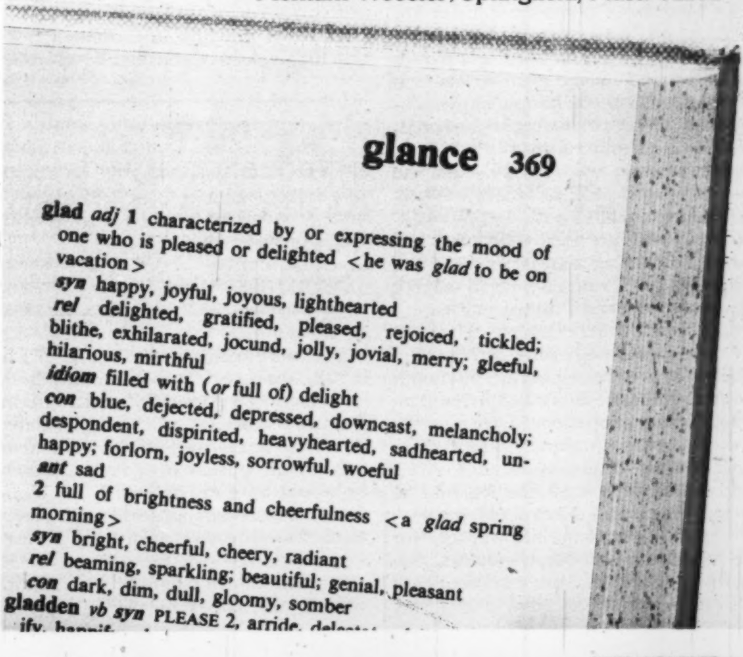


glance 369

glad *adj* **1** characterized by or expressing the mood of one who is pleased or delighted <he was *glad* to be on vacation>
syn happy, joyful, joyous, lighthearted
rel delighted, gratified, pleased, rejoiced, tickled; blithe, exhilarated, jocund, jolly, jovial, merry; gleeful, hilarious, mirthful
idiom filled with (*or* full of) delight
con blue, dejected, depressed, downcast, melancholy; despondent, dispirited, heavyhearted, sadhearted, unhappy; forlorn, joyless, sorrowful, woeful
ant sad
2 full of brightness and cheerfulness <a *glad* spring morning>
syn bright, cheerful, cheery, radiant
rel beaming, sparkling; beautiful; genial, pleasant
con dark, dim, dull, gloomy, somber
gladden *vb syn* PLEASE 2, arride, delect

sary. (Subsequently, his death penalty initiative also qualified for the November ballot.)

Many of those who signed the antigay petition were fundamentalists. Briggs himself says that he had a personal experience of Jesus Christ when he was eight years old. "The great majority of those who understand the tradition of the Bible will vote for the initiative," says the Reverend W. B. Timberlake, whose Committee on Moral Concerns represents 1,000 evangelical pastors and 3,000 lay leaders in California. The committee pressures and rates state legislators on such issues as pornography, bingo, gambling and drugs.

The faith—and the fears—the committee embodies have moved voters if not mountains, as Anita Bryant's Dade County campaign demonstrated. In fact, says Briggs, it was when he flew to Miami to volunteer for Bryant's crusade that the Lord inspired him with the idea of the Briggs Initiative.

At the same time, David Mixner was getting a very different idea from Anita Bryant—that he had to come out of the closet. "What they were saying on that ballot in Dade County was that they could fire me because of who I was," he recalls. "I didn't have black skin, but it was my sexuality."

Mixner remembers "how horrible it was all those years to be a hidden gay." He recalls sitting in campaign meetings where "fag jokes" were standard fare during discussions of the gay vote. It happened in every campaign he worked in—McCarthy's in '68, McGovern's in '72, John Tunney's Senate race in '76, Tom Bradley's L.A. mayoral race in '77. "I wanted to get up and scream, 'Goddammit, I'm gay—that's me you're talking about!'"

But he didn't. "I hated myself for not speaking up," Mixner says, but he was worried that he would become a pariah in politics and maybe even in his own conservative Catholic family. He lived in constant terror of being discovered. Mixner never told a lover his last name until three years ago. "For 20 years," he says, "I wasn't able to tell my closest friends who I really was."

In 1975, Mixner finally did tell a few friends, including actress Shirley MacLaine. By 1977, when he was managing Bradley's re-election campaign, he felt he had to tell Bradley as well. The antigay assault was beginning in Miami; a Bradley opponent might find out about Mixner's homosexuality and make it an issue. If that happened, Mixner promised the mayor, he would resign and absolve Bradley of any knowledge. After the campaign, Mixner decided that he had to come out of the closet all the way: "I'd spent most of my life working for the liberation of others—blacks, the Vietnamese and migrant workers. But I wasn't free myself."

In June 1977, Mixner sent a letter to his close friends in politics. In it, he asked help for "me and my friends to gain our freedom. I can't really describe to you what it is like being gay and watching the Dade County returns come in..." He and Peter Scott, a lawyer who chaired the euphemistically named MECLA, the Municipal Elections Committee of Los Angeles, a gay political action organization, were going to publicly fight the "new brand of repression" against gays, Mixner said in his letter. He was, he wrote, counting on his friends "as never before."

One of those friends was columnist Mary McGrory. Mixner worried about her reaction; she is Catholic and very Irish. But when she came to California this spring, she and Mixner talked and afterward she wrote a tough column against Briggs and his initiative. Two other friends, Anne Wexler (a top Carter aide) and her husband, Joe Duffey (chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities), contributed to the campaign against the Briggs Initiative.

Sam Brown was a different, and more painful, story. Brown, director of ACTION, the federal agency that includes the Peace Corps and VISTA, was Mixner's best friend. They had been the *Wunderkinds* of McCarthy days and the peace movement. Mixner helped manage Brown's 1974 campaign for state treasurer in Colorado, and more recently Brown had offered him a high post at ACTION. For all that, however, Brown reportedly was upset when he received Mixner's letter. The two men had shared an apartment: What, Brown wondered, would people think about *him*? Mixner asked Brown for a contribution and for some visible sign of support. At a conference in Minneapolis this July, Brown told Mixner that his old friend had put him in a difficult position, but agreed to consider co-sponsoring a fund-raising reception in Washington for the NO-ON-6 Committee. Brown also gave him a $50 contribution. But two weeks later, when Mixner called to follow up, Brown explained that in light of the uproar over Peter Bourne, he would have to check with the White House before co-sponsoring the reception. "I know what that means," Mixner says.

Briggs rates homosexuality as "the hottest social issue since Reconstruction"

He had known from the start that his coming out could mean "losing your friends, your jobs, your dreams and visions," as he said in his June 1977 letter. Since then, an associate from antiwar days has told Mixner that he never would have been co-chairman of the Vietnam Moratorium "if we had known about you." A congressional candidate told Mixner and Scott last summer that he wanted their consulting firm to run his campaign—but that he couldn't take the risk. This July, a liberal nominee for state office in California confessed to the same fear, after complimenting Mixner and Scott for submitting the best, and the least expensive, campaign plan.

Mixner: "I wasn't free myself"

Such caution is epidemic among politicians. Last October, on his first trip to Washington since writing the letter, Mixner went to several old acquaintances for help, including liberal Democratic senators Floyd Haskell, Don Riegle and Birch Bayh. All thought the Briggs Initiative was, in Bayh's phrase, "a hideous thing." And most said they might have a bad word for it publicly—if someone else said it first. Morris Udall, whose scheduling director in the 1976 presidential campaign was a closet gay who soon after was killed, apparently by homophobic maniacs, pleaded his district's prejudice. "I'm running for Congress," he told Mixner, "Tucson has had a lot of problems on this issue."

At a party given by Ann Hart, the daughter of Michigan's late Senator Phillip Hart, Mixner talked with another McCarthy campaign alumnus, Jim Johnson, now executive assistant to the vice president of the United States. Mondale was for human rights, Mixner argued, so he should come out against the Briggs Initiative. Johnson laughed. Mixner persisted: "No, I'm serious"—and shortly thereafter Johnson left the party.

Back in California, Mixner worked with more success to politicize the state's gay rights movement. Senate Democrat-

Photograph: Wide World

ic Whip Alan Cranston agreed to speak to the Los Angeles gay rights chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. Several other politicians, all from liberal districts or with liberal bases, joined the Honorary Advisory Board of New Age—the New Alliance for Gay Equality, formed to fight the Briggs Initiative. One of the first recruits was maverick Republican Congressman Paul McCloskey, who had challenged Nixon's renomination in 1972. The New Age board also has enlisted former Senator John Tunney, California Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally, two other congressmen, three of forty state senators and nine of eighty state Assembly members, including Howard Berman, probably the next Assembly Speaker.

One California politician for whom the Briggs Initiative might seem particularly dangerous is Governor Jerry Brown. Brown, 40 and single, has been the subject of leering rumors and innuendos for years. Former Los Angeles Police Chief Ed Davis, who unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination to oppose Brown, publicly congratulated him on having found a girlfriend (Linda Ronstadt). Attorney General Evelle Younger, who beat Davis for the GOP nomination, constantly emphasizes the fact that he's a "typical family man." (John Briggs is less subtle. Noting that Brown once had attended a closed-circuit telecast of a "Cassius Clay fight," Briggs added: "Jerry may be accused of having some effeminate qualities, but that isn't one of them.")

Brown certainly isn't running for reelection on gay rights, but he hasn't run *from* the issues raised by the Briggs Initiative either. He has come out against it as unnecessary and repressive. In March, at the convention of the liberal California Democratic Council, he damned the initiative vigorously. Says NO-ON-6 campaign coordinator Levett, "We have no complaints about the governor. He's been good on the issue."

Perhaps the people who have found it easiest to be "good" are members of the motion picture industry. Neil Simon and his wife, Marsha Mason, Shirley MacLaine, Paul Newman, James Garner and Julie Harris, plus a host of luminaries ranging from Abigail Van Buren ("Dear Abby") to Harry Reems (*Deep Throat*), are on the New Age Advisory Board. Mike Levett cites "incredible offers of freebies from film directors, editors and writers to work on our media campaign."

A poll of 900 Californians taken last February for the anti-Briggs forces showed that most actors and actresses don't influence the public on the gay issue. One of the few who does is Carol Burnett, who is perceived as "someone who understands ordinary people." Mixner hopes to persuade Burnett to appear in some anti-Briggs television commercials. She already has agreed to raise money, as have other entertainers.

Pointing to just such Hollywood backing, John Briggs has suggested that there is "a large, well-financed movement in this nation which seeks to give homosexuality society's stamp of approval. Nowhere is this movement better organized or more powerful than in California." Actually, Briggs appears to be far better off financially in the struggle over his initiative than its opponents. Not only did he raise, and spend, $850,000 getting the initiative on the ballot, but he's planning a $1 million campaign to get it passed this fall.

Most gay workers are new to politics, and they echo the enthusiasms of the 1960s, including that decade's naive faith that hard work in a good cause must prevail

By contrast, the NO-ON-6 Committee is scrounging. So far, it and its allies have spent $100,000—or one-tenth as much as Briggs. An operative on Briggs' side admits that "the well-financed homosexual conspiracy" is a myth, at least in this campaign. "They're having real trouble raising money," he says.

Even traditional liberal givers have been, at best, unevenly generous. Mixner was stunned one day talking to centimillionaire and Vietnam antiwarrior Leo Wyler, a friend for six years. "I don't want you, or people like you, teaching my kids," Wyler said bluntly. And some entertainers have been reluctant to contribute either talent or money. Elton John declined to do a benefit concert; his manager reportedly was upset about the backlash after John confessed to bisexual escapades in a recent interview.

Under California law, any campaign contribution of $50 or more must be publicly reported. The law was intended as a reform, but in effect it makes it risky for teachers to contribute much to defend their own liberties. For them, the Briggs Initiative is proving a Catch 22. By opposing it openly, they are violating its terms and could be fired if it passes. For teachers, silence is the better part of prudence. Volunteers call the NO-ON-6 headquarters, identify themselves as teachers and leave only their first names. When KNBC-TV asked to interview a teacher opposed to the Briggs Initiative, Levett at first couldn't find one. "They all wanted to be anonymous," he says. "So KNBC offered to let one of them appear wearing a hood. But that would look awful—like some kind of conspiracy." Finally, after making calls for a solid week, Levett found four teachers willing to show their faces on TV against Proposition 6.

(The San Francisco ACLU has sued to compel the state's Fair Political Practices Commission to suspend the disclosure requirement for teachers contributing to the effort against the Briggs Initiative; in this case, argues the ACLU, the requirement is an unconstitutional infringement on free speech.)

Despite the social costs, growing numbers of gays such as Mixner are ready to defend their sexual preference. Lesbians Diane Abbitt and Bobbi Bennett, who have faced tough custody battles to keep the children of their earlier marriages, have joined the steering committee of the anti-Briggs campaign. Their names appear on tens of thousands of leaflets. Terence O'Brien, the son of actor Pat O'Brien, the perennial priest of movies past, belongs to the advisory committee of MECLA. Other gays have opened the closet door without completely coming out. The NO-ON-6 finance chairman is a wealthy realtor who drives a Rolls Royce. She is a lesbian who is known as such in Los Angeles, but she's anxious not to see her name in a national magazine. Her family "back east" might see it.

The consequences of coming out frequently drive gays to psychiatrists. The new Kinsey report says that homosexuals as such are not necessarily more disturbed than heterosexuals, but the pressures on gays going public present particular problems. Many gays at L.A.'s anti-Briggs headquarters regularly take time off to visit their psychiatrists. "What we need around here is a full-time shrink," says one volunteer. Such jokes, some self-deprecating, others aimed at anti-gay stereotypes, are told at the headquarters incessantly. They are a common form of comic relief among homosexuals. In the Hollywood Gay Pride Parade this July, one student organization marched with a sign: "Two, Four, Six, Three/We're the Queers from USC."

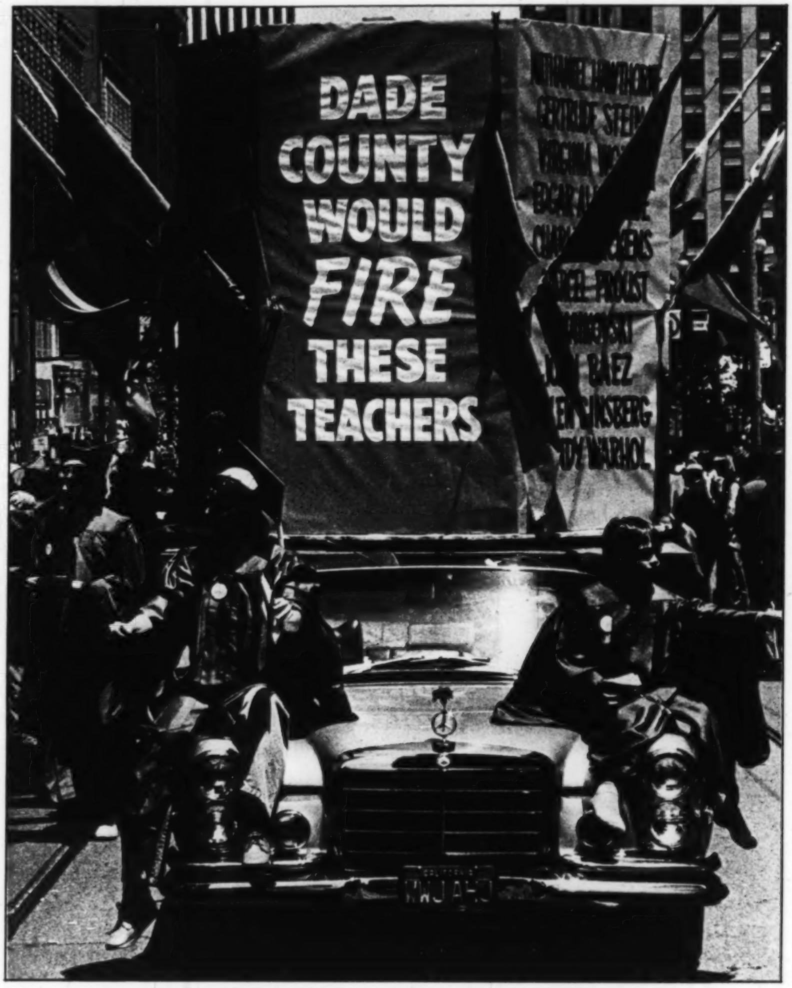
Another sign in the same parade satirized the Briggs Initiative: "If I'm bisexual, can I teach part-time?" The line symbolized one problem facing opponents of Proposition 6 as they try to mobilize California's gays. "Briggs is a negative issue," explains Bob Wechter, field director of the anti-Briggs forces. "Gays don't want to deal with it seriously. They would rather laugh at it."

When actor Martin Braddock called gay merchants asking them to donate food and wine for the opening of the NO-ON-6 headquarters, he found himself constantly having to explain what the Briggs Initiative is. Traditionally, the gay community has been apolitical. The campaign's press secretary, Sallie Fiske, notes, "With this community, you're dealing at square one on politics. You have to explain: voting-is-a-good-thing-to-do-if-you-want-something." Wechter, who coordinated the campaign of a gay candidate for a municipal judgeship, says that it was "almost impossible" to get out the gay vote.

The NO-ON-6 Committee has two political neophytes in charge of registering gays to vote, Bo Young and Mason Sommers. Young believes that "a lot of gay people won't register. They're afraid of jury duty. They're not used to voting." Sommers adds: "Even when gays register, they tend to move frequently—and then they don't think about reregistering."

Sommers and Young have been setting up registration tables in gay restaurants and clubs. A few of the restaurants have been resistant, including one of L.A.'s most famous gay spots, The Louisiana Purchase. "They told us we could only be in the parking lot," Sommers angrily reports. But he and Young have responded to such setbacks inventively. They've been registering 100 voters each weekend at the gay beaches in Laguna and along the Venice-Santa Monica waterfront.

Most of the gay workers at the NO-ON-6 headquarters are new to politics—and they sound it. They echo the enthusiasms of the 1960s, including that decade's faith that hard work in a good cause must prevail; they don't seem to understand that such notions are relics, curiosities from a disappointed past. As Bo Young says, with the earnestness of someone who has just discovered the idea, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem."


DADE COUNTY WOULD FIRE THESE TEACHERS

Gay Freedom Parade: After the teachers who—all other civil servants?

Photograph by Dave Patrick

"Telefag" brought 20,000 gays to Disneyland one night this spring

Politically naive or not, the gay community finally appears to be getting itself together for the campaign against Proposition 6. They've figured out, for example, how to take advantage of at least one stereotype. On Sunday, September 17, for 10 hours, California hairdressers are holding a "clip-in" to defeat the Briggs Initiative. If 100 shops statewide do the hair of 100 people at a reduced price averaging $15 and contribute the money to the campaign, it will mean $150,000. (A hundred shops around the state is hardly a high number to hope for: In Los Angeles County alone, there are 43,000 hairdressers and 10,000 salons.)

At a planning session for the clip-in, one stylist objected to asking Vidal Sassoon to participate: Sassoon had once expressed outrage, the stylist recalled, that the industry was being "smeared" as homosexual. Mixner answered patiently, and practically: "A lot of people are with us who weren't in the past. We have to make room for them." To publicize the clip-in, the gay L.A. Tavern Guild will put up posters in gay bars. This means of communication, known among gays as "telefag," brought 20,000 homosexuals to "gay night" at Disneyland this spring. (Disneyland officials at first didn't realize they had rented their park for such a gay evening; it had been rented in the name of the Tavern Guild.)

Gay leaders recognized early on that the campaign against Proposition 6 had to convey the message that more than gay rights (or wrongs) were at stake. So to run the campaign they hired Don Bradley, a veteran of the California Democratic establishment who has helped manage campaigns from Helen Gahagan Douglas' 1950 run against Richard Nixon to San Francisco Mayor George Moscone's 1975 race. Bradley is a reassuring presence to conventional centers of power in the Democratic Party. One labor official says Bradley's role was critical in the California Federation of Labor's decision to oppose Proposition 6.

After agreeing to spearhead the anti-Briggs forces, Bradley called Mike Levett, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, and asked him to sign on as the Southern California director. Levett, whom Carter pollster Pat Caddell rates "one of the most talented political operatives anywhere," was hesitant. He wasn't sure he was emotionally prepared for a tough campaign that was likely to get dirty. He turned Bradley down; but when Levett's wife urged him to take the job, Levett changed his mind.

Levett believes the best chance of beating the Briggs Initiative is to establish that "there must be something wrong with it because virtually everybody is against it." John Briggs is close to a minority of one among state officials in supporting it. The only question among Ronald Reagan's advisers is whether he should oppose the initiative publicly or remain neutral. Under pressure from Briggs, Republican gubernatorial nominee Evelle Younger has decided to be neither for it nor against it—which for Younger is about par for the course.

The Los Angeles City Council has passed a resolution opposing Proposition 6. So have the California Federation of Teachers, the League of Women Voters, the state's superintendent of public instruction—and the California Young Republicans! The school board in Santa Barbara, hardly a bastion of radical lifestyles, voted 5 to 0 last September to prohibit discrimination in hiring on the basis of "sexual preference." David Mixner even recruited three Catholic priests to join 33 other religious leaders in the Inter-Faith Committee to Defeat the Briggs Initiative. (One of the priests, Father Sean Flanagan, said he would join the committee and sign a letter, but he couldn't show up at a press conference. "I don't want to be sent to Alaska," he explained.) Finally, the state's major newspapers, including the conservative *San Diego Union*, edited by former Nixon press aide Gerald Warren, have editorialized against the initiative, as has KNBC-TV in Los Angeles.

"On this issue," says Levett, "the politicians are ahead of the people." Nonetheless, the results of the February poll taken for the anti-Briggs forces were better than anyone expected. The 900 Californians polled split 50–40 against the initiative before hearing the arguments on each side, and 50–46 after. Majorities did not believe that homosexuality is a sin or that homosexual teachers are a threat to the preservation of the family. One Briggs associate, who declines to be identified for obvious reasons, thinks the initiative won't pass. "There are too few fundamentalists here," he says. "People don't care that much if teachers are gay, as long as they don't try to influence their kids."

In every poll, the issue that troubles voters most is the idea that gay teachers might be role models for impressionable children. It is the argument Proposition 6 proponents are pushing hardest. Most authorities contend, however, that a child's sexual identity is well established before he ever gets to school. Mike Levett believes that the issue can be dealt with logically, but doesn't know "whether we can overcome the myths in 30-second TV spots."

Gay leaders themselves were unprepared for the "role model" objection. Peter Scott says that before Dade County and Anita Bryant, "the role model issue had never occurred to us. We fought for the first 15 or 18 years of our lives not to be gay. Role models just aren't relevant."

Their polls did point NO-ON-6 managers toward an offensive strategy. A strong plurality of those polled, 44 percent, believed that "a person's sexual preference has nothing to do with his or her ability to teach English, math, or other subjects." A majority was concerned that the initiative would lead to invasions of privacy and a costly new bureaucracy that could threaten all teachers, whatever their sexual proclivities. Upon written complaint about any teacher or staff member, school boards would be compelled to hold one, often two, hearings, involving potentially high legal, clerical and investigative costs. No one can estimate the total. "I may not look much like Howard Jarvis," says Mike Levett, "but I'm willing to sound like him for the duration." Certainly the latest NO-ON-6 brochure echoes Jarvis: "Proposition 13 was a vote against costly, unnecessary, wasteful bureaucracy. Proposition 6 would create just such an expensive bureaucratic boondoggle."

"What scares me is people going into the booth and voting for that last great taboo"

The anti-Briggs forces have one last asset—Senator Briggs himself. Polls show him to have strong negative ratings across the board. Consequently NO-ON-6 literature emphasizes his identification with the initiative. Briggs is likely to be the leader on the issue through the campaign; Anita Bryant has announced she will not be coming to California to speak in its behalf. (One gay leader is relieved, not because he thinks Bryant would be that effective but because "half a million people would hit the streets if she went to San Francisco. They'd shout obscenities; they'd invade her hotel. She might get hurt—and we'd be hurt politically.")

Sallie Fiske says: "Thank god it's been Briggs on the other side. The media has stopped to listen to us." At the same time, gay leaders realize that Briggs might try something they couldn't counter. Already he's mailed out reproductions of the New Age newsletter with "CONFIDENTIAL" stamped across it in red capital letters and a comment that makes the newsletter seem a secret part of a conspiracy of "mobs of militant homosexuals." (In fact, the newsletter is free to anyone who wants it.)

Briggs is not above the lower forms of fag-baiting. He has sent out a picture from the *Los Angeles Times*, along with a letter suggesting that recipients "take a good look at the man in the photo who is wearing an earring and fingernail polish. Ask yourself this question, 'Is this the kind of man I want teaching my children?'" A source familiar with Briggs' media campaign reports that his TV ads may feature still photographs of young boys killed by homosexual Dean Allen Corll in Houston and of the victims of the trash bag murders in California, followed by film of their bodies being dug up or lifted out of garbage cans. ("How would you fight back," asks Sallie Fiske, "—put together film on a series of heterosexual murders?")

Proposition 6 could well overshadow California politics this November as Proposition 13 eclipsed the state's primary in June. Mike Levett guesses, hopefully, that with two black candidates for statewide office, the election may bring out a high number of minority—and presumably more liberal—voters. Says Sallie Fiske, "We can win, but I'm not at all sure we will." She sees the gay issue as "the last great taboo. What scares me is people going into that booth and voting for the taboo." The struggle is only the latest in a long series—civil rights, the campus revolts, women's rights—that since 1960 has compacted vast changes into a short period. "People have been asked to accept a lot," Fiske says. "We're feeling the reaction to all of it."

Unlike many of the gay volunteers at the headquarters on Wilshire Boulevard, David Mixner learned in the McCarthy campaign and the antiwar movement that political miracles are hard to come by. He's working hard on this one, but sometimes he gets discouraged: "When I was in Washington last October, I got tired of the number of politicians who took me into a corner and told me they were gay. Not one of them thought they could come out of the closet. They were terrified of being exposed." Mixner worries as well about the "homosexual conspiracy," as John Briggs calls it, being able to raise enough money to have even a chance to be heard. "Every second I have to spend on this issue infuriates me," he says. "How would you like to go around trying to convince people that homosexuality didn't cause the fall of Greece and Rome?"

Early in August, Mixner mentioned a parcel of measures that might adorn the California ballot this fall—Briggs, busing, the death penalty and a ban on cigarette smoking in public places. Then, in one of those sadfunny jokes that gays so often tell on themselves, and on the rest of us, he asked: "Why don't we just combine all the initiatives and bus gays to smokeless gas chambers?" ●

The Prince of Torts

Marvin Lewis has made a career out of cases that make *Niemi* v. *NBC* seem tame. Maybe that's why, when the judge threw him out of court, Lewis took it as a compliment

by Marlene Adler Marks

"Lawsuit, n. *a machine which you go into as a pig and come out as a sausage."*
—"Devil's Dictionary."
Ambrose Bierce

Never was there a more eager sausage-stuffer than Marvin E. Lewis. Lawsuits are his meat, his potatoes, his gravy—he can't get enough. Here he is, only weeks past his 71st birthday (July 14), near to celebrating his golden jubilee as a member of the legal bar, and the white-haired "Boy Orator" (as he was once called when he was well into his fifties) is still claiming victory in defeat, hailing his most recent joust with legal windmills as a personal triumph.

"I've got the case of the century," said the high-stepping Lewis. His face would look fine on a nickel, and when Lewis dresses for court in his silver and gold suit, he appears to glitter. If trial attorneys are like rainmakers—every seed is a storm, each case is the big one—*Olivia Niemi* v. *the National Broadcasting Company,* the case with which Lewis intended to prove that television violence can cause crime, is a potential hurricane.

"This lawsuit has had a cleansing, a cathartic effect on the nation," said Lewis the day after a San Francisco judge threw the case out of court and told NBC it was home free—that its television show *Born Innocent* would not have to stand trial for having led to the rape of a nine-year-old girl.

For a man with four years of his time and some $50,000 of his law firm's money tied up in a case that he couldn't even get before a jury, Lewis sounded as ebullient as ever, vowing victory on appeal. "We've thrown the fear of God into them," he said, referring to no less than *all* television networks. "They don't want any more litigation like this, ever."

Lewis has never been the sort of man to look with regret at yesterday or even a half-hour ago. Instead, he boasted, "Hundreds of letters are pouring in—they're praying for me. It's amazing!" And, just as important: "I don't have time to appear on all the programs that are asking for me," he added, savoring, somehow, a wine he will never acknowledge as sour grapes.

Not that Lewis went looking to take on NBC, or the First Amendment, or the entire National Association of Broadcasters, which he seemed to be doing, at least by extension. No. Valeria Pope Niemi, Olivia's aristocratic mother, came to him after being rejected by four other big-name San Francisco lawyers. They looked at the case and shuddered, then whispered the name "Marvin Lewis," the only man crazy enough and brave enough to walk into a hornet's nest like this one.

For the Niemi case, Marvin Lewis was attempting to do what the Federal Communications Commission, years of congressional hearings, and the lobbying efforts of the National PTA have failed to do: put an end to television violence once and for all.

But was Lewis merely convincing himself he could do it? That he could circumcise the First Amendment and carve out an exception to the guarantees of free press and free speech where television "harms children"? Perhaps this case was a loser from the start. But as he pursued it up and down the appellate court pike lo these many years (and even now that he's starting that same journey all over again), Lewis has managed to convince a lot of other people that he is indeed serious. To the PTA and other anti-violence advocates, Lewis is something of a hero. To the television industry, however, the mention of his name conjures up an Orwellian nightmare of censorship.

Lewis could never, ever understand why Hollywood hates him. Censorship? He avoids the word. "This case has nothing to do with the First Amendment," he keeps repeating. "It's a personal injury case. They can broadcast what they want. But if someone gets hurt, shouldn't they have to pay?"

By now, everyone concerned with the case knows its tortured facts: that nine-year-old Olivia Niemi was raped on Bakers Beach in San Francisco, not far from her home, on September 14, 1974. She was attacked by three girls and a boy, ages 9 to 15. They shoved a bottle up her vagina, leaving the kind of damage a bottle coated with sand would leave on a frightened virgin. The four were arrested; the female ringleader was tried, convicted and sent to reform school.

But there was apparently reason to believe that the young ruffians modeled their act on the television show *Born Innocent,* which had aired four nights before Olivia Niemi was attacked. In the show, Linda Blair, child star of *The Exorcist,* had been raped with the handle of a bathroom plunger by four teenaged girls. The similarities between the "dramatic" crime in a reform school shower, and the real crime on the beach so soon after the show's airing, formed the basis of Marvin Lewis' suit.

Lewis sued NBC and its San Francisco affiliate, KRON, attempting to prove that the shower scene—less than 10 minutes of the two-hour program—incited the teenagers to imitate the crime and led directly to the assault on

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Marlene Adler Marks is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles. This is her first article for New Times.

Photograph by Tom Tracy

Olivia Niemi on Bakers Beach. He believes that the networks, by virtue of their monopolization of public airwaves, have a special duty to protect children.

Hearing the facts of the case, a reasonable person might indeed link cause and effect—the show and the rape—but that's not so easy to do in court. Everything was against Lewis. Among other things, he had to prove that at least one of the four assailants actually watched the program, the fact that Lewis did not know for certain before the trial began. Even more significantly, he had to prove in court that the network actually incited the audience to violence—incitement in this case meaning actually advocating the act. He couldn't prove this, and he knew it, but then he never intended to try. Instead, he had built his entire case on a theory called negligence, where an act sets off a chain of events that foreseeably harms an innocent bystander.

It would have taken a judge in an imaginative frame of mind to grant Lewis' theory. And Judge Robert Dossee, elevated from the municipal courts to fill in for a vacationing judge, was not quite up to it.

Lewis was breaking so much new legal ground, in fact, that one might think NBC could have beaten him with one hand tied behind its corporate back. But that's the incredible thing about Marvin Lewis, the Pink Panther of the legal profession. He always bounces back. At two critical junctures over the past four years, he has succeeded in changing judges' minds on points crucial to his case. Early in 1976, when the trial judge announced his intention to throw *Born Innocent* and Lewis out of court, Lewis rose to speak, and within hours the judge saw his point. Two years after, a similar thing occurred, just as the Niemi case was again ready for trial. This time, a new judge viewed the film and announced that the program was, in his opinion, the kind of speech protected by the Constitution and therefore the trial must stop. But due to a technicality, Lewis lived to collect a $5 bet he made in court that day: The case was reversed on appeal, when the higher court judges ruled that the film had been seen at the wrong time, and under a wrongly named motion. He's so convincing, this Boy Orator, that by the day the trial was set to begin for a third time, one of San Francisco's most experienced court reporters said she felt certain that nothing would stop the case from reaching a jury verdict—a verdict that would certainly go to Lewis.

In many respects, this is the perfect lawsuit for Lewis, and a fitting valedictory for a man who has spent a lifetime on cases that make Olivia Niemi's problems seem tame. Born in San Francisco in 1907, one year after the earthquake, Marvin Lewis has made a career of help-

Ruled Innocent: The 10-minute segment that shook the broadcast industry

Wine or Sour Grapes: Lewis and Valeria Niemi are vowing victory on appeal

Photographs: top, Memory Shop; bottom, Wide World ing people out of the rubble. His world, that of a personal injury lawyer, is by its very nature filled with calamity, where "cause" and "effect" are fluid terms of art, to be stretched and shaped like clay. For Lewis, there is only the next client, the next auto accident or plane crash—the next case to file.

Some personal injury attorneys specialize in "leg-offs," "arm-offs," spinal cord dissections or any number of physical infirmities that arise from accidents. Lewis' specialty is "psychic torts," the wrongful action with the invisible injury. His clients have no wooden crutches, neck braces or wheel chairs by which to prove they truly suffered from their run-ins with broken elevators, drunk drivers or other mishaps of life. And while it may seem easy to convince a jury that a client has a screw loose, Lewis' peers know differently.

"He understands the mind," says his friend Melvin Belli, the "King of Torts." As early as the forties, Lewis applied Freud's teachings to the civil trial, and has written a legal test on the subject.

Lewis' career in psychic torts began in earnest with a fall into Hell. In May 1956, 23-year-old June Di Mare walked out of her second-story apartment and fell through a badly rotted wooden staircase. She swung by her armpits 15 feet above the ground for several moments and later, upon returning to her apartment, fantasized that she was being dragged into Hell by Satan, who she believed was punishing her for her previous wanton life.

At the ensuing trial, in which Di Mare sued her landlady for negligence, a psychiatrist testified that Di Mare had been a latent schizophrenic at the time of her accident. She had had a tough, neglected childhood, and "her fall constituted a major emotional trauma of her life." Di Mare won $100,000 from her landlady, and fame for her attorney, Marvin Lewis. It was also the beginning of a close relationship between Lewis and the now-deceased psychiatrist Meyer Zeligs.

Several years later, Di Mare's landlady could no longer make the payments on the judgment, and her insurance company refused to pay more than $10,000 toward her policy. Lewis, taking an assignment of the debt, went to trial against the company. He won not only all the money owed to the landlady, but an additional $25,000 for mental suffering as a result of the insurer's failure to settle the case before trial. It was a landmark in bad faith of an insurance company, and the trial certified Lewis' esteem among the often rabbinical breed of appellate lawyers.

Over the years, Lewis has worn a path around the marble rotunda of the rococo-style San Francisco City Hall, "waiting for the baby," as he calls the jury's deliberation period. Never was he more nervous than one fall day in 1971, when the jury was deciding how much, if anything, to give Gloria Sykes, star plaintiff in Lewis' most famous case, dubbed "the Streetcar Named Desire." During rush hour, Sykes had been rammed into a pole of a San Francisco cable car, and claimed the accident turned her into a nymphomaniac, or, as Lewis would put it, "a woman with an endless desire to be held by men." The press, locally and nationally, had a field day with the story. When Sykes herself took the stand, however, she said her attorney, Lewis, had made the whole story up. She was fine, she said.

"We've thrown the fear of God into them," said Lewis, referring to no less than *all* television networks

"I thought my eyes would pop out when I heard that one," he recalled. At the time, Lewis had just presented a stream of experts who testified about her psychological upheaval. "I told the jury that my client was just giving them more proof as to her mental state," said Lewis recently. "If she had gotten on the stand and said she was crazy, they shouldn't have believed her."

Lewis won a $50,000 judgment against the city.

In the summer of 1973, he tried a similar case, with a less happy result. Lewis went to Orange County, California, on behalf of a woman who also "became a nymphomaniac," or so she said, after being locked in a sauna bath for five minutes. Lewis insisted the woman had become a schizophrenic "with more personalities than Sybil," as he kept telling the jury, referring to the best-selling novel of the day, a copy of which he kept facing the jury throughout the trial. His client had one personality, "Mary," who went to bars and picked up men, while "Maria," the strict Catholic, disapproved. The then 65-year-old Lewis kept going during the lengthy trial despite prostate trouble, and for two weeks presented testimony with a catheter in his groin. But neither the catheter nor Sybil could help convince the jury. The baby miscarried.

"She was a terrible witness," said Lewis of his former client. Lewis also added that Meyer Zeligs wasn't on the case and the new psychiatrist was "terrible, too." "But the jury didn't rule on the nymphomania," Lewis insists. "They said I had done such a good job establishing that the sauna bath door was bad that even my client should have seen it."

It has taken years for Lewis to learn to weed out the deserving crazy from the merely nuts. He recently rejected a woman who said she was receiving messages through her vagina from people from another planet. "I knew that one wasn't serious," said Lewis with a straight face.

To the people he works with, Lewis is a hero, an innovative thinker. "A lot of attorneys wouldn't do what he's done," says Maja Hanks, a young associate who looks like a latter-day Della Street. "I'm proud of him even for mentioning that things like nymphomania exist."

But Lewis knows his friends laugh at his cases, and says defensively that "my colleagues don't understand what I do." And he's right. Lewis has a reputation around the city as an attorney who looks first at the publicity value of a case, and then to see if there is anything to win.

Lewis is known in legal circles for putting on a good show. The more press in the gallery, the broader the stroke. And since the Niemi case involves the media, reporters have been particularly attentive. "The press is here," chortled Lewis one day while making a small motion. It was only a lone reporter, but Lewis nevertheless was pleased. When he stood at the lectern, hands pushing his silver suit jacket and holding his back, he was William Jennings Bryan on the Cross of Gold, he was Lincoln at Gettysburg. Not for nothing do they call him "Boy Orator." And, because public speaking is so much the lost art, he is something of a put on.

"There are times I've watched Marvin work and I just squirm," said a friend. "But then he wins."

Lewis always plays to the jury, of course, but he is careful to keep the press awake as well. One day, Lewis and the NBC attorneys were ensconced in the judge's chambers for hours discussing pre-trial motions. The press, seeing how slowly things were going, started to pack up. "Don't go away," said Lewis, poking his head out the courtroom door. "Something's going to happen." Nothing did, and nothing is more ornery than bored members of the press. A day later, when the judge ruled on the issue of incitement, Lewis played it for all it was worth.

"The judge is defining incitement by saying I have to prove NBC told [the audience] to rape a girl with an eight-foot object!" Lewis cried, his voice rising in a tide of rehearsed anger.

An eight-foot object?

Lewis chucked softly. "Oh, I mean an eight-inch wooden handle. Whatever could I have meant?"

Lewis had been looking forward to the constant press coverage. Stories had been appearing in newspapers and magazines months before the trial and Lewis' wife, Frederica, had carefully clipped a copy of each and placed them behind plastic covers in Lewis' scrapbook, there to join the hundreds of articles that commemorate a career of grasping for the public eye.

As the black-and-white glossy pictures that line the walls of Lewis' den attest, the press has been covering him for years, and he particularly liked the days when cameras were allowed in courtrooms. In the *Born Innocent* matter, Lewis proudly reported that San Francisco TV station KQED petitioned the court to allow the televising of the trial. It would have been his heart's desire to have those cameras there.

To Lewis, a trial is like figure skating—a beautiful act in itself, a performance. Performance is indeed the operative word. His mother, Selena, was a noted elocution teacher. Marvin trained with her, and yearned for a career in the theater.

"My mother said no," recalled Lewis, his eyes amazingly still averting with the pain of deprivation. "I guess she knew what she was doing," he added. The young thespian had spent so much time on the debating team during high school that he was not prepared for college. In fact, he never went, and proceeded on to law school at night.

Having lost out on the love of his life, Lewis went into theater of another order: first politics (he was a San Francisco supervisor for 10 years) and then trial law. But an actor is what he became. While he was a supervisor, beginning in 1945, Lewis clung to the press like lint to Scotch tape. Former board members laugh to recall how Lewis exploited local radio, which used to broadcast live the first hour of public meetings. He usually called his motions out of order for early hearings, monopolized the air time and then packed his bags for home when the reporters packed theirs.

Today, the old pro still doesn't skip a beat. "I never miss a chance at a closing argument to the jury," said Lewis, who is no slouch at long-winded opening statements either. "The judge always says, 'Now be brief, Mr. Lewis.' But I always go right ahead."

Lewis walks like he's leading a parade. Even in quiet conversation he is addressing the multitudes. He's the totally rehearsed man, with a character-actor laugh and a seemingly spontaneous though essentially vacuous smile, which he uses like a comma or semicolon to emphasize his thoughts.

One day at lunch, the conversation momentarily turned away from the Niemi case. Lewis grew restless. He quickly grabbed the spotlight back with his full brogue rendition of Robert W. Service's "Shooting of Dan McGrew," his favorite 10-minute poem about a mysterious guy shot dead in a bar, then kissed by "a gal named Lou." He wasn't bad either.

Lewis doesn't really converse, he recites lines. All the reporters covering the Neimi case heard exactly the same "eight-foot, I mean eight-inch" mistake regarding NBC's incitement. To spend a few days with him is to realize that, however extemporaneous he might sound, everything he says he has repeated verbatim over the years.

Lewis refined his routine with his loyal wife, Frederica, whom he seems to regard as his jury-in-residence. He does, however, get irritated when she doesn't understand something. Always reaching for the masses. Always the trial lawyer.

Having kept the town laughing for years, Lewis is still absolutely serious about the Niemi matter and tends to regard it as the summation of his life's work, which in many ways it is. Although he was a founding president of the California Trial Lawyers Association, and was elected president of the national organization in 1971, Lewis is still looking for something to seal the verdict on his abilities as an attorney.

Lewis' most famous case was dubbed "A Streetcar Named Desire." His client, who had been rammed into a cable car pole, claimed the accident turned her into a nymphomaniac

Thus, in the initial smog of defeat in the Niemi case, Lewis found it necessary to publicly congratulate himself for bringing a lawsuit that, he says, "focused the attention of the world on what's going on in the broadcasting media." He believes that since he first brought this suit the networks have responded with a "stricter type of picture," by which he certainly means films with less sex and violence. "It's a victory," he said, "by the very fact that we've gotten in court."

And to some extent Lewis is right. In the last four years, the nation has become increasingly suspicious about the role of the media, and decisions by the Supreme Court seem to reflect that cynicism. Lewis took sustenance from the recent George Carlin decision, in which the Federal Communications Commission was granted the right to ban Carlin's "seven dirty words" routine from the airwaves when children might be listening. "That's my point exactly," said Lewis, who then wondered aloud if the nine justices had perhaps read his brief.

Similarly, Lewis was heartened by a California Supreme Court decision ruling that the First Amendment doesn't always protect a radio station from lawsuit. In this particular case, a Los Angeles disc jockey had urged his teenaged listeners to race around town in order to locate his car. A crash resulted, and the victim sued the station, charging that the disc jockey was inciting kids to dangerous activity. The court agreed and Lewis maintains that it also applies to *Born Innocent*.

Of course, Lewis is not the only attorney to say that television causes crime. He would, however, like to place an ocean between himself and the first notorious trial in this area, the Florida murder case against 15-year-old Ronald Zamora, who blamed his actions on the numbing effect of television violence. Zamora said that television turned him into a moral zombie. "A boy who chooses Kojak as his hero knows right from wrong," said Lewis in a voice of outrage. To Lewis, Kojak is a moral television force, so good he's a fantasy figure. But, Lewis insists, there's nothing fantastical about *Born Innocent*, a program in which the female rapists were never punished.

If there is a real victory in this latest defeat, it probably lies in Lewis' success in getting NBC to take him seriously. "Five hundred of them, and only one of me," he gloated while preparing for the trial. Until this year the network would not even concede that there was a case. After losing so many appeals, however, NBC hired new, high-powered counsel and professed to see large social issues at stake. To James Brosnahan, NBC's dapper, sophisticated San Francisco-based media attorney who would have tried the case had it come to trial, *Niemi* involved "one of the deepest differences in Western civilization: between those who attribute the cause of what happens to them to others, and those who take responsibility for their own acts."

The Niemi case, such as it was, ended not with a bang of clashing philosophies, but with a whimper of a theory thrown out before it ever reached a jury hearing. At least this is what Lewis intends to claim on his next appeal. He is very good at what he does, and can spot a procedural flaw a mile away. And it was on procedural grounds—the dotting of i's and the crossing of t's—that Lewis was able to keep this lead balloon of a case afloat for four years, while his colleagues thought it wouldn't last a day.

Because of his appellate victories, Lewis was able to create the impression that in *Niemi* he had a winner. As one San Francisco reporter commented, Lewis "couldn't have bought all the publicity he received in this case." And that's a victory of sorts, too. For Lewis, even being thrown out of court is something of a compliment. He just picks himself up, dusts himself off, looks for the nearest tape recorder and begins to sing, as he does in the case of Olivia Niemi, "I'm gonna get this case to the jury—if I live that long."●

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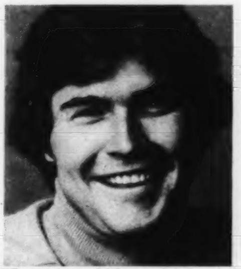

"Sometimes I like to drink Campari with soda. Other times I like it with tonic. But mostly, I like to drink Campari with Melissa."
—Steve Gibson, San Fran.

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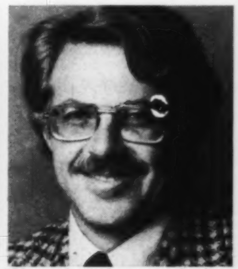

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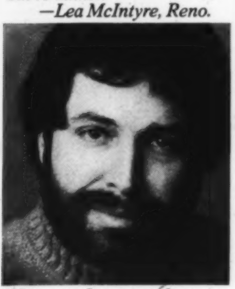

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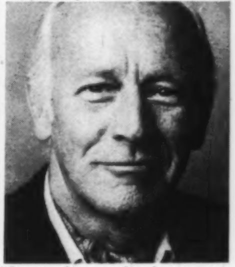

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—James Barker, Wash., D.C.

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WITH WHAT MINOLTA KNOWS ABOUT CAMERAS AND WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF, WE CAN MAKE BEAUTIFUL PICTURES TOGETHER.

If you've considered buying a 35mm single lens reflex camera, you may have wondered how to find the right one out of the bewildering array of models and features available.

And with good reason, since the camera you choose will have a lot to do with how creative and rewarding your photography will be.

What you pay for your camera shouldn't be your only consideration, especially since there are some very expensive cameras that won't give you some of the features you really need. So ask yourself how you'll be using the camera and what kind of pictures you'll be taking. Your answers could save a lot of money.

How automatic should your camera be?

Basically, there are two kinds of automatic 35mm SLR's. Both use advanced electronics to give you perfectly exposed pictures with point, focus and shoot simplicity. The difference is in creative control.

For landscapes, still lifes, portraits and the like, you'll want an *aperture-priority* camera. It lets *you* set the lens opening, while *it* sets the shutter speed automatically.

This way, you control depth-of-field. That's the area of sharpness in front of and behind your subject. Many pro photographers believe that depth-of-field is the most important factor in creative photography.

At times you may want to control the motion of your subject. You can do this with an aperture-priority camera by changing the lens opening until the camera sets the shutter speed necessary to freeze or blur a moving subject. Or you can use a *shutter-priority* camera, on which you set the shutter speed first and the camera sets the lens automatically.

Minolta makes both types of automatic cameras. The Minolta XG-7 is moderately priced and offers aperture-priority automation, plus fully manual control. The Minolta XD-11 is somewhat more expensive, but it offers all the creative flexibility of both aperture and shutter-priority automation, plus full manual control. The XD-11 is so advanced that during shutter-priority operation it will actually make exposure corrections you fail to make.

Do you really need an automatic camera?

Automation makes fine photography easier. But if you do some of the work yourself, you can save a lot of money and get pictures every bit as good.

In this case, you might consider a Minolta SR-T. These are semi-automatic cameras. They have built-in, through-the-lens metering systems that tell you exactly how to set the lens and shutter for perfect exposure. You just align two indicators in the viewfinder.

What to expect when you look into the camera's viewfinder.

The finder should give you a clear, bright view of your subject. Not just in the center, but even along the edges and in the corners. Minolta SLR's have bright finders, so that composing and focusing are effortless, even in dim light. And focusing aids in Minolta

Minolta makes all kinds of 35mm SLR's, so our main concern is that you get exactly the right camera for your needs. Whether that means the advanced Minolta XD-11. Or the easy-to-use and moderately priced Minolta XG-7. Or the very economical Minolta SR-T cameras.

minolta
XG 7
minolta
XD 11
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minolta
AUTO 200X
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XG7
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AUTO 200X
minolta
XD11
MD ROKKOR-X

Automatic sequence photography is easy when you combine a Minolta XD-11 or XG-7 with optional Auto Winder and Electroflash 200X.

viewfinders make it easy to take critically sharp pictures.

Information is another thing you can expect to find in a well-designed finder. Everything you need to know for a perfect picture is right there in a Minolta finder.

In the Minolta XD-11 and XG-7, red light emitting diodes tell you what lens opening or shutter speed is being set automatically and warn against under or over-exposure. In Minolta SR-T cameras, two pointers come together as you adjust the lens and shutter for correct exposure.

Do you need an auto winder?

You do if you like the idea of sequence photography, or simply want the luxury of power assisted film advancing. Minolta auto winders will advance one picture at a time, or continuously at about two per second. With advantages not found in others, like up to 50% more pictures with a set of batteries and easy attachment to the camera without removing any caps. Optional auto winders are available for both the Minolta XD-11 and XG-7, but not for Minolta SR-T cameras.

How about electronic flash?

An automatic electronic flash can be added to any Minolta SLR for easy, just about foolproof indoor photography without the bother of flashbulbs. For the XD-11 and XG-7, Minolta makes the Auto Electroflash 200X. It sets itself automatically for flash exposure, and it sets the camera automatically for use with flash. An LED in the viewfinder signals when the 200X is ready to fire. Most unusual: the Auto Electroflash 200X can fire continuously in perfect synchronization with Minolta auto winders. Imagine being able to take a sequence of 36 flash pictures without ever taking your finger off the button.

You should be comfortable with your camera.

The way a camera feels in your hands can make a big difference in the way you take pictures.

The Minolta XD-11 and XG-7, for instance, are compact, but not cramped. Lightweight, but with a solid feeling of quality. Oversized controls are positioned so that your fingers fall naturally into place. And their electronically controlled shutters are incredibly smooth and quiet.

Minolta SR-T's give you the heft and weight of a slightly larger camera, but with no sacrifice in handling convenience. As in all Minolta SLR's, "human engineering" insures smooth, effortless operation.

minolta
SRT 201
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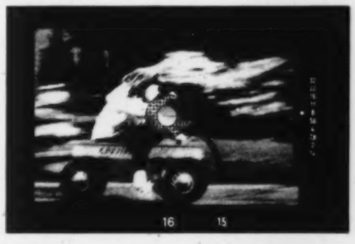
Are extra features important?

If you use them, there are a lot of extras that can make your photography more creative and convenient. Depending on the Minolta model you choose, you can get: multiple exposures with pushbutton ease (even with an auto winder). A window to show that film is advancing properly. A handy memo holder that holds the end of a film box to remind you of what film you're using. And a self-timer.

What about the lens system?

The SLR you buy should have a system of lenses big enough to satisfy your needs, not only today, but five years from today. The patented Minolta bayonet mount lets you change lenses with less than a quarter turn. There are almost 40 Minolta lenses available, ranging from 7.5mm fisheye to 1600mm super-telephoto, including macro and zoom lenses and the world's smallest 500mm lens.



The electronic viewfinder: LED's tell you what the camera is doing automatically to give you correct exposure.

B 1 2 4 8 15 30 60 125 250 500 1000

The match-needle viewfinder: just align two indicators for correct exposure. Because you're doing some of the work, you can save some money.

What's next?

Think about how you'll use your camera and ask your photo dealer to let you try a Minolta. Compare it with other cameras in its price range. You'll soon see why more Americans buy Minolta than any other brand of SLR. For literature, write Minolta Corp., 101 Williams Drive, Ramsey, New Jersey 07446. In Canada: Minolta Camera (Canada) Inc., Ontario.

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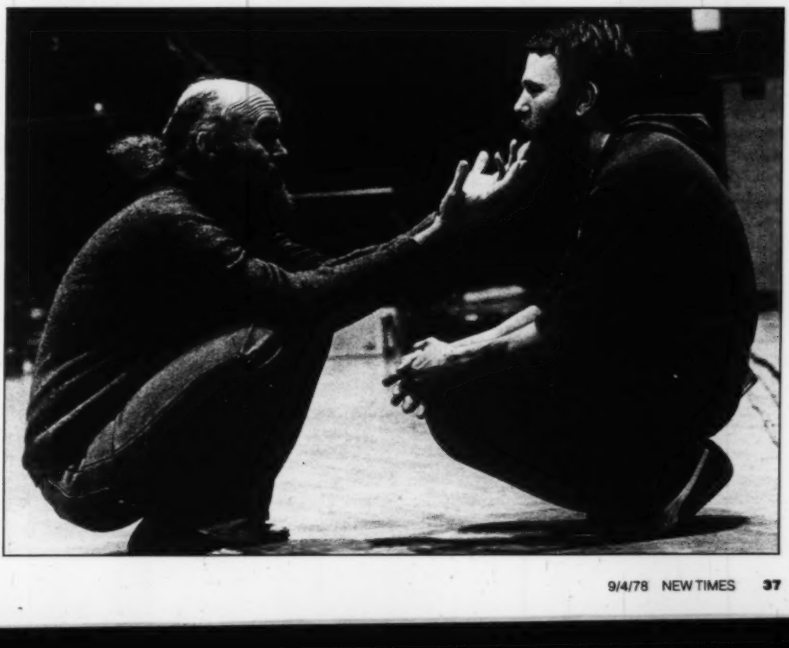
MINOLTA

WE WANT YOU TO HAVE THE RIGHT CAMERA.

Ram Dass, Nobody Special

Already he has been through several exotic incarnations, each time a step ahead of the culture. But in the Me Decade, what's a guru to do?

by Calvin Fentress



Photograph opposite by Peter Barry Chowka; this page, by Calvin Fentress

They open in Santa Barbara. Santa Barbara is a disaster and thus perfect. In the modest handouts announcing the occasion, it has been billed as "An Evening with Ram Dass and Friends—a flowing space of love . . . words . . . music . . . images . . . silence." Nice 'n' easy. Ram Dass evenings are like that.

But not this one: The 16 x 20-foot slide screen is impossibly cumbersome, the two projectors are noisy, the ten mikes and eight rock speakers are going haywire, and the acoustics in the University of California's Robertson Gym are lousy to begin with. For this, 2,200 people have paid $3 each, which isn't bad, but the gym is half empty.

Then there are the Jesus freaks, a half dozen in brown robes, and for the first half-hour they insistently proselytize the crowd. When one begins to stride toward Ram Dass, tour manager Maruti Projansky, flashing on Arthur Bremer, hurries to the side of the platform: There are always those on the holy circuit anxious for a psychic duel with Ram Dass, and Maruti knows that if physically attacked, R.D. won't defend himself.

"You're going to *hell* because Jesus is the only way," shouts the agitated young man a few inches from Ram Dass' face.

Barefoot, R.D. stands very still beside the stage, his own paranoia in low. "You may well be right," he says.

Unsure how to deal with this unflinching noncombatant, the young evangelist agrees to take his cohorts and leave, although not before pulling the plugs on the speakers and projectors.

Santa Barbara, in other words, is almost as inauspicious a return to public life for Ram Dass as his departure from it two years ago. "The whole spiritual journey is a continuous falling on your face," he has said, but back then he had rather overdone it. He had been seduced, spiritually and bodily, by the most unlikely guru in Brooklyn, proclaiming her an enlightened being, then later thinking better of it. "Egg on my beard," he called it in an apologia to his followers before disappearing into the welcome anonymity of the Far East. There is a time to be born and a time to split. People had had enough of Ram Dass, holy man.

> **"It's funny to talk about God in the West. It's not that God is dead, just that God is not a viable concept"**

To the hundreds of thousands who looked to him for spiritual sustenance and savvy, his fall was a jolt—"like seeing the Wizard of Oz unmasked," one follower lamented. But then Ram Dass had been shaking things up for years, first in the sixties, when he was still Richard Alpert, Harvard professor and sidekick of Timothy Leary, and later as a barnstorming guru.

There was no denying Ram Dass had a riveting impact on people. Most were swayed by his books and lectures, but many others were zapped up close. Magazine editor Elliot Sobel, for example, met Ram Dass in New York two and a half years ago. "He was on the radio," Sobel says, "and although what he was saying sounded just too way out and spiritual for me, I'd read his books and liked them, so I decided to go down to the station and meet him. As he was leaving, I stood up and said, 'I came to meet you.' He looked at me, and it was like something I'd never experienced before; I felt like I was meeting the oldest friend I ever had. We hugged for a few moments, although I wasn't the kind of person who ever hugged anybody, least of all strange men. He asked if I wanted to come see him that afternoon. I said yes, and for the next three hours I got very crazy, the whole thing felt so profound. When I got to his place, we went into a dimly lit room with candles and incense burning. He sat in the cross-legged position and I sat in the cross-legged position about one foot opposite him, and for an hour I stayed in that position with direct eye contact; and every time I tried to divert my eyes, with his finger he would direct my eyes back to his. He asked me to share with him exactly what I was experiencing moment to moment. He'd say, 'What are you thinking now, what are you feeling now?' I realized there was no way I could hide anything from this man, no way I could bullshit him, partly because I felt intuitively that it was absolutely safe—that no matter what I said I was loved and accepted. So all my worst fears and darkest secrets came out in the first two minutes. The very first thing that came to my mind was, my penis is too small, and he said, take off your pants, so I took them off and I was sitting there without any pants on, and I looked at him and I realized I was still alive and lightning hadn't struck me. He pushed me as far as I could go at that point, and all my fears came tumbling out; and each thing I'd reveal, I'd look at him and realize it was all still okay, that it was just my own imagination that was making them so dark."

Small wonder that to so many he seemed larger than life, or that his pratfall two years ago seemed the same. And his two-year withdrawal did nothing to dampen interest in him. Among the curious was a writer for the *New York Times Magazine*, who traveled to New England last summer to meet Ram Dass. The story she later wrote, "Confessions of an American Guru," was the most extensive coverage he had ever received from the establishment press, and it was a broadside. It focused on R.D.'s "blatant lies" (drawing a parallel between Nixon and Ram Dass) and concluded by suggesting he was a psychopath.

"It's no longer clear whether I'm famous or infamous," said Ram Dass afterward. Either way, his anxiety was rising sky-high as he approached a monthlong, 14-city reentry tour this spring. He wondered if he had anything left to say—or indeed if anyone was still listening. But if he had no idea what to expect from his audience, the reverse was also true. He had been through several exotic incarnations already, twice foreshadowing major movements within the culture—in the sixties as a psychedelic pioneer, in the seventies as a star in the spiritual supermarket. Good guy, bad guy, burnt-out case—who knew what he might be this time around? Certainly not him.

"These are all just takes," he said not long ago, sipping a Budweiser at a friend's New York apartment, "and you can put them together in any combinations you want: Ram Dass was chosen, he was brought to his guru, given the secret initiation, and now he has come back to liberate the West... That's a nice one, you like that? How about, this acidhead, his neuroses drove him and drove him and drove him, he's built a total psychosis out of this thing, he sucked a lot of people in, but now a lot of them are waking up, the whole thing is falling away, it was all just a myth. How about that one? That's just as good as the one before, there's as much data to support one as the other."

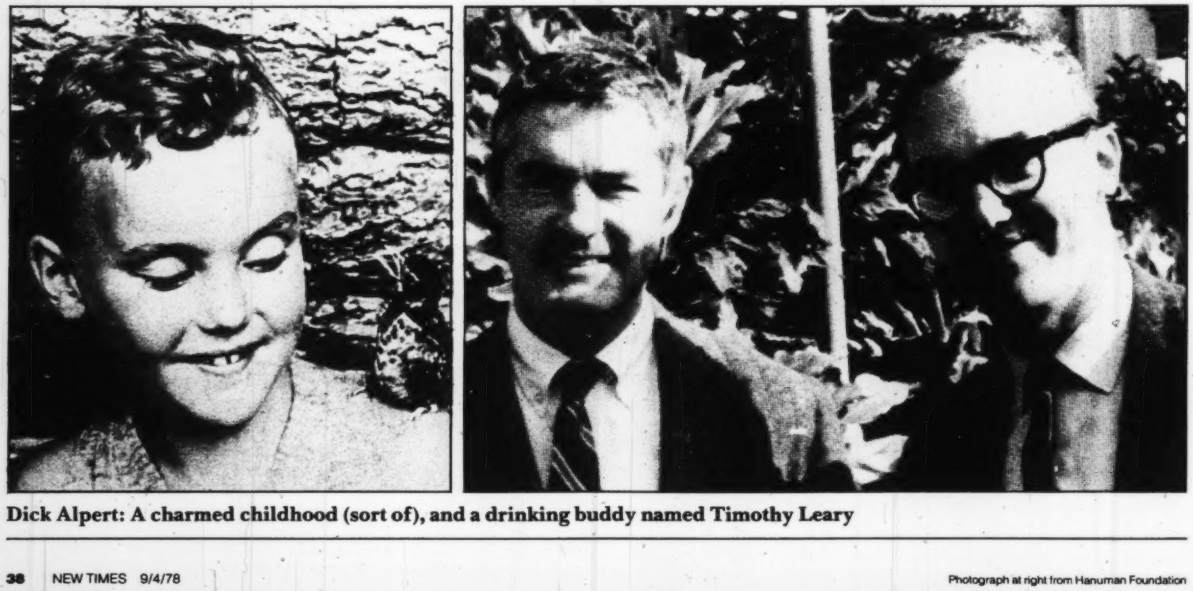
In welcome contrast to the first-night fiasco in Santa Barbara, the 3,000 who show up at L.A.'s Shrine Auditorium appear delighted to have him back. But in San Francisco there are hecklers all night ("Dick Alpert, you old bore, what the hell are you doing up there?!"), and when the sound system burns out, Ram Dass finds himself shouting instructions to quiet the mind.

"BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO YOUR NOSE!" he yells.

"WHADIDYOUSAY?" comes back a holler from the rear of the large hall.

"We've created a monster," R.D. says after San Francisco, and he abandons the unwieldy slide show and enlarges his troupe to nine by adding two young women to help lug the showbiz cargo. And with these adjustments, as they move up the coast from Marin to Eugene, Seattle, Victoria and Vancouver, the Ram Dass show begins to assume a smooth and familiar shape.

Like his view of existence, Ram Dass evenings have no beginning, middle or end. With R.D. in the shadows on cello, the audience enters to a little night music. "My God is *real*/I can *feel*/Him in my soowoool..." sing his three fellow musicians. After a while, Ram Dass moves forward and seats himself, half-lotus, off to one side, leaving center stage to the others. At 6'2" and 180 pounds, he is a commanding figure, even in Levis and a baggy gray sweater. His beard is a thicket of Grecian Formula 16 browns and grays. "It started turning all white," he sometimes tells audiences, "and suddenly everyone was treating me like this old wise man, like Lao Tzu come back. Who needs it? I had the choice of shaving it



Dick Alpert: A charmed childhood (sort of), and a drinking buddy named Timothy Leary

Photograph at right from Hanuman Foundation

off or changing its color, so I dyed it."

He lights a stick of sandalwood incense and takes a sip of tea from the thermos beside him. His eyes close; he begins to breathe deeply, *ahhhhhhhhhh*, and as he grows still, so does the audience. "This evening," he says finally, "is entitled 'Nothing New by Nobody Special,'" and soon he is telling stories about his guru, or about his lunch with Larry Flynt a few days before the publisher was shot, or about his parents.

"I took acid to go to my mother's funeral," he says. "The family was seated on one side of the casket and the rest of the people on the other, so they could watch us mourn. And I could see that everybody expected me to grieve, so I showed signs of grief because they wanted me to." The incense curls up into his beard. "But what I was experiencing was Mother and I hanging out watching the funeral together; we were enjoying how many people had gathered out of love for her, and seeing that she was remembered in their hearts that way. The whole thing was radiant for me—I was in ecstasy. I wanted to smile, but I realized that would be the final straw, that if I smiled it would be like a Charles Addams cartoon; you know, 'Smiling at his own mother's funeral!—he's the one who takes drugs, obviously.'"

That reminds him of a story—everything reminds him of a story. He rambles, he roams, digressions within digressions ("If I get back from this one, I'll be doing well"). He elucidates and entertains, mystifies and stupefies, touching scores of spiritual bases as he goes. He talks about sex ("There's nothing more vengeful than a horny celibate"), about contemporary confusions ("If I'm saving the whale, why am I eating tuna fish?"), and often, with gentle self-mockery, about himself ("I'm in a 47-year-old body; I'm a male, Jewish, balding biped, upwardly mobile, mildly manic depressive. I seem earnest"). "What is this moment?" he asks. "Are we meeting in a cave around a fire? Are we in a place we have always been meeting...?"

Slipping on his wire-rimmed glasses, he may pull a quote from a sheaf of papers in his plastic Ramada Inn bag and read aloud. Talk, music, talk, stretch, music, meditate, talk... "Those of you who've had enough," he says after a couple of hours, "go in peace—it's not better to go or stay," and often a few hundred leave. The rest remain all three and a half or four hours, with 150 or more lingering past midnight to greet him.

Ram Dass' sizable audiences on the tour are mostly white, middle class and between the ages of 25 and 35. They were raised as Catholics, Jews or Protestants, but for most, it was he who awakened their spiritual curiosity. Many have taken acid or been to India; many have not. Some keep a picture of a guru on their bureaus, but most no longer wear their souls on their sleeves. Gone are the robes, beads and sandals of yesteryear. Gone are the limpid eyes and incandescent smiles. They are off the mountain now; Bhagawan Das, R.D.'s celebrated first guide in India, is selling Dodges in Santa Cruz.

As his small caravan—station wagon, van and U-Haul truck—moves up the Pacific coast, Ram Dass' popularity is not easily gauged. Five years ago he drew 5,000 people in San Francisco and 150 in Victoria; this time around he draws half as many in San Francisco, 10 times as many in Victoria. "You can feel the movement of ideas throughout a culture," he says. "I used to do well in San Francisco. Now I do well in Tampa and Montreal." His first book, *Be Here Now*, which in seven years has sold 623,000 copies with virtually no reviews and no promotion, has just been published in Hungarian, and is already available in French and German, with Spanish and Japanese translations due later this year.

Sometimes even R.D. is startled by his impact. When he returned from the Far East last year, he went through U.S. Customs in Honolulu. Customs inspections often are a hassle for him ("my legacy from Tim Leary"), so when a uniformed officer approached, he was prepared for the usual scrutiny.

"Aren't you Ram Dass?" asked the Customs man. R.D. said he was.

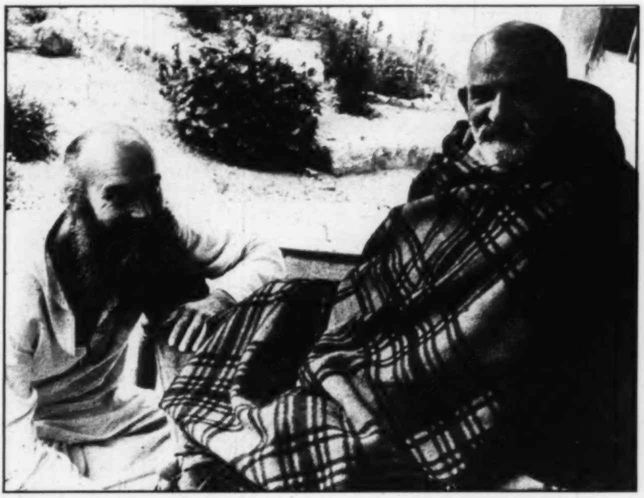
"If I'm saving the whale, why am I eating tuna fish?"

The official beamed. "I've read all of your books and I just wanted to come over and tell you I really love you. Can I have a hug?"

"When Customs officials are hugging *me*," says Ram Dass, "something sure is happening out there."

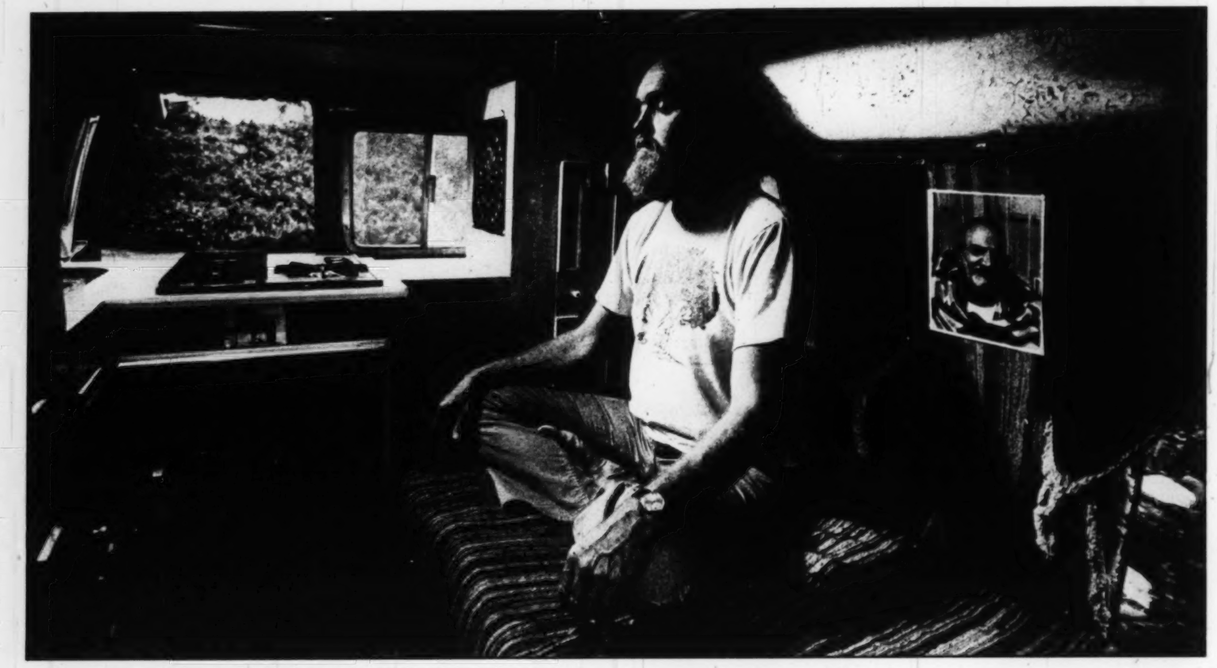
The last thing George Alpert ever expected of his third and last-born son was spiritual leadership; even the family's temple attendance had been sporadic. No, Rich wanted to be a doctor, a brain surgeon, he said; while his friends were getting fountain pens for their bar mitzvahs, Richard got a biography of the Mayo brothers.

A successful lawyer for a father, an adored mother, weekends and summers on a 190-acre New Hampshire farm complete with three-hole golf course—at those levels, Dick Alpert led a charmed childhood. But though he tells a lot of stories now, he doesn't tell many about his youth. For one thing, he was so fat that he had to wear double-Z pants with balloon seats. Fat was hell. So was Williston, the Massachusetts prep



Ram Dass: With Maharaji, the bell rang and the light went on. Back in America, he grooved on God

Photographs L. to R.: Rameshwar Das, Peter Simon



Home is where the van is: His legal residence is a dollar-a-year room in New Hampshire

school he attended:

"About halfway through my first year, I was wrestling with another boy—it was clearly a homosexual process, though neither of us understood that—and some seniors were watching through a closet peephole. They spread the word that they had caught us in this thing, and in a prep school the result was that nobody had anything to do with you... That was such a dark period, but that fire did a lot to make me grow."

Rejected by Harvard, Alpert settled for Tufts; there he proved such an unpromising pre-med student that when offered a graduate research assistantship in psychology at Wesleyan, he grabbed it. A year later he went on to Stanford for his doctorate.

Alpert was still at Palo Alto when his father unexpectedly was named head of the floundering New Haven Railroad. Richard began commuting cross-country to help him. "It was my first taste of power," he says. "In California, I was a graduate student in charge of buying coffee cups for the lounge, while in New York, I was helping make decisions involving millions of dollars. I'd go back to Stanford and someone would say, 'Where have you been, Dick, we're out of coffee cups?' After a few months, I got to where I'd say, tough shit, go buy them yourself. That juxtaposition showed me so vividly the way the ugliness of power can creep in on you."

In Palo Alto, he spent $26,000 and five years in psychoanalysis, and when he broke it off to take a job at Harvard, his doctor urged him to reenter therapy in Cambridge because he wasn't well enough to function in society. But at Harvard, he functioned very well, thank you—or so it seemed. He held appointments in four departments, had research contracts at Stanford and Yale, and was in demand as both a teacher and a therapist. He owned an electric-blue Mercedes, a Triumph 500 CC motorcycle and a Cessna 172. He had it made, only his life was like a stage set. Every time he lectured he got diarrhea. He was a heavy drinker. His sex life was a sham.

One day in 1959 they cleaned out a closet down the hall from Alpert and put in a desk for a new psychology instructor named Timothy Leary. Alpert and Leary quickly became drinking buddies, then started teaching courses together ("Existential Transactional Behavior Change"). About a year after they met, Leary journeyed to Mexico, and on a sunny afternoon in the garden of a Cuernavaca villa, ate seven mushrooms which had been given to him by a Mexican anthropologist. They were Tionanactyl, the flesh of the Gods, the magic mushrooms of Mexico, and for Leary they triggered "the deepest religious experience of my life."

Back at Harvard, Leary convinced the university to let him embark on a large psychedelic research project and, with the help of Aldous Huxley, persuaded Sandoz labs to produce a synthetic of the mushrooms called psylocybin. He then invited his pal Dick Alpert to share in the bounty. In March 1961, when Alpert took his first 10 milligrams of the new drug, the pictures smiled, the rugs crawled and his body disappeared. Nothing was ever the same again.

Leary and Alpert believed they had found a way to open the channels between the conscious and the unconscious—to explore realms that before they had only theorized about. Soon they were popping anything, popping everything, prescribing their own ecstasy and madness. Leary and Alpert, the Lewis and Clark of the mind.

Revved up both by what they were finding with their psychedelic research and by what he himself was ingesting, Alpert was converting his lectures into discussions about drugs. Some days he appeared with dilated eyes and talked about butterflies in belfries and the syncracity of the universe, and the graduate students would raise their eyebrows and exchange knowing looks.

Alpert didn't care. To teach was not enough, he had decided. He would become the teaching—not the experimenter, the experiment. It was a tough one for Harvard. Academic freedom was one thing, but *this*, this was getting out of hand. Who knew whose brains were being addled? "They weren't being at all careful about who they were giving these things to," says Professor David McClelland, Alpert's academic mentor and still his friend. "Tim wanted to give my mother-in-law, then in her early 70s, psylocybin. I said, 'But Tim, she's just gotten over a very bad stroke and is still partly paralyzed; you really don't have any idea if it's dangerous in the purely physical sense.' But they pooh-poohed that, that was just conservative squareness. They had decided this was the new approach that was going to cure everyone of everything. They became very grandiose."

Photograph by Peter Simon

In 1963, when Leary refused to give grades, then stopped showing up for classes altogether, his Harvard contract was not renewed. And a few months later it was discovered that Alpert, despite his promise not to, had given drugs to an undergraduate and then lied to university officials about it. He was called into President Pusey's office and fired. (Alpert argued that he had dispensed the drugs not in his capacity as a faculty member but as the student's personal friend; it was, says McClelland, "a very legalistic argument.") In the *New York Times* the next morning, Alpert's dismissal was front-page news.

For the next four years, with Tim as front man and Rich right behind, Leary and Alpert were America's foremost apostles of the psychedelic revolution. "Tune in, turn on, drop out"—that was the credo they coined. Ram Dass remembers speaking on panels around the country to college deans about the drug crisis, then going back to his hotel room and having the deans trickle up one by one to ask if he would turn them on. "It was exquisite," he says.

The frustration for Alpert was that no matter how much he took or how high he got, the doors of perception always shut behind him. After almost 300 trips, a depression set in—"a very gentle depression that whatever I knew still wasn't enough." Instead of getting high, he wanted to *be* high. "It is either make this thing permanent inside of you," as Tom Wolfe wrote, "or forever just climb draggled up into the conning tower for one short glimpse of the horizon."

By 1967, Alpert had shot his load. His academic career lay in shambles behind him, and as far as he was concerned, the psychedelics had dead-ended. When a friend invited him to join in a Land Rover journey through India to look for holy men, Alpert accepted. "What else was I going to do at that point?"

It seems like old times as the Ram Dass Chautauqua reaches midjourney in Canada and prepares to swing down to Boulder. Audiences are showing up expecting a nice tip-toe through the cosmic tulips, and for the most part R.D. is delivering. He's charming, he's hip, and as disarmingly confessional as ever. But to Ram Dass, it's not good enough. For the first five or six stops he has found himself recapitulating. "I'd get up and I didn't feel any sense of humor, yet I felt like I had to entertain, so I'd struggle to remember funny stories to tell, old tapes that I'd pull out of my library. But I hate doing that any more. You know which lines will get the major feeling effect and you're doing it for that, but it's no longer a living thing."

During the three-day stopover in Boulder, Ram Dass spends much of his time attending to operational details of the Hanuman Foundation, which he started in 1974. To the extent that R.D. has allowed himself to become institutionalized, the Hanuman Foundation is it. Tax-exempt and nonprofit, it serves as the umbrella not only for his tours, but for tapes of his talks, spiritual projects dealing with prisoners and the dying, and, most recently, a meditator's guidebook, *Journey to Awakening*.

No one is getting rich off Hanuman. Like the three musicians performing with him, Ram Dass is receiving $1,500 for the month-long tour. Last year, he paid taxes on about $17,000, most of it from royalties, the rest from lectures. To his father's bewilderment, he has given all the royalties from *Be Here Now* (about $300,000 thus far) to Hanuman and another spiritual foundation. Aside from his stereo-equipped second-hand Dodge camper, he has no assets and no real home; his legal residence is a dollar a year room in New Hampshire.

A few hours before he is to speak in Boulder, R.D. drives out to the Rocky Flats nuclear plant and sits silently with some 40 others in meditative protest. Three days later, he leads a chilly Sun Day ceremony at dawn on the University of Kansas campus; afterward he remarks that while the words and music were okay, the occasion lacked "juice."

For a long time there had been precious few words, let alone juice, from Ram Dass on almost anything political. In 1968, his friend Allen Ginsberg sent some clippings to him in India about the antiwar demonstrations, and R.D. wondered then if he was copping out behind the lines. He decided not: "The political movements always seemed too worldly to those of us in the spiritual movements." Many of his friends thought it was his blind spot, and his critics still do. "It's an esoteric, escapist approach," says Sherman Goldman, editor of *East West* magazine. "He's saying relax, enjoy yourself, be permissive and nonjudgmental—that's very nice, but it doesn't solve the world's problems. The guy on the corner who sells me cigars knows a lot more about life than Ram Dass."

As his 1978 tour unfolds, however, R.D. is talking more about social and political action than ever before. "You can't walk away from life on this plane," he tells his audiences.

He is talking more about politicians, too. At a Hollywood party given for him in 1974 by someone interested in making a movie of his life, he recalls, he introduced himself to a forlorn-looking young man in a suit.

"What do you do?" asked Ram Dass.

"I'm running for governor," said Jerry Brown, who, it turned out, had been to a Ram Dass talk and had come to the party expressly to meet him; after Brown was elected, his aides felt out R.D. to see if he would be interested in working for the new administration. (He wasn't.)

In 1975, Ram Dass was staying at a motel in Berkeley when the phone rang and someone asked if the governor could stop by. Brown drove up alone, and for an hour the Zen Jesuit and the Hindu Jew talked about Christ. "The old mind thought, 'My God, a governor has come to my motel room. I must be somebody.' I tried to get a little leverage off it, but it was empty, it was just nothing, which was surprising for an old power tripper like me.") A year later, when Brown challenged Carter in the primaries, Ram Dass sent him a $500 contribution—"I felt he was the more conscious being." But as soon as Brown began campaigning in Maryland, R.D. says, he saw the governor's feet of clay: "He was mouthing clichés. He wanted the power too much. And if that cool, cute Zen mind doesn't have more compassion with it, it's not enough."

Compassion and suffering, suffering and compassion. Each night now, there are fewer charming guru stories and more talk of suffering and compassion: "Before, I was so busy appreciating the perfection of the universe that I was not getting my hands dirty in the suffering; I didn't want to get lost in it like everybody else."

There is talk of death as well; Ram Dass believes that dying provides the most significant opportunity for spiritual awakening in a lifetime, and to that end he often works with the dying and their families.

When her two-year-old daughter lay near death in the Stanford University Hospital last summer, a young woman named Robyn Wesley phoned Ram Dass in Massachusetts. "We had never met, and it was two in the morning and he was asleep," she remembers, "but he was more available to me than anyone has ever been in my life. I was feeling, God, I can't handle this, I can't even look at it, my beautiful baby can't die. I felt like I was going crazy. And he said, 'Just be here for a second, just experience it.' He said, 'Just breathe, just breathe in and out, don't do anything else,' and we breathed together on the phone for a long time. It helped take me out of my terror; just his presence over the phone relieved it. The main thing he gave me was a sense of acceptance. He showed me that I could open my eyes and look at what was going on and let it be exactly what it was. The things he said and has written really helped me. He's an incredibly loving human being."

> **"The guy on the corner who sells me cigars knows more about life than Ram Dass "**

Suffering, compassion, death and dying. "Last time I heard him," complains a woman in Lawrence, Kansas, "everybody got high, but this just wasn't the same." Moving east, R.D.'s presentation and persona alike are getting tougher, leaner, less slick. In Chicago, he smokes a little grass before going on, then tells the audience at the start, "I'm not going to talk down to you—we're not in the first grade any more."

Even the hugging is different. At each evening's end, he stands, as always, at the front of the auditorium, available to all comers; often as many as 200 wait for a word or a hug, or a chance to push their pelvises against his. For a half-hour, an hour, all the way out to his car, he gives whatever seems required—a nuzzle, a kiss, a comforting whisper... in New York, an autograph on a worn pack of matches to a drunk who has stumbled on the scene. He turns no one away, but off stage as on, he sometimes seems a little bored by it all, even irritated.

"Something sure as hell is happening," he says toward the end of the tour. "Back around Santa Barbara and San Francisco, I was still trying to be charming. But now it's as if I don't want to seduce anybody any more, I don't want to win a popularity contest. Boulder was the beginning of this other thing where I just feel, I am what I am and here it is, you can do whatever you want with it, it's your karma not mine. Now I'm just going to say it like I see it."

Dick Alpert was three months and 1,300 slides into his deluxe Land Rover tour of India in 1967 when, in the Blue Tibetan restaurant in Nepal, he met a 23-year-old ex-surfer named Michael Riggs. Riggs had taken the name Bhagawan Das, and he not only knew the Indian spiritual scene but seemed to Alpert to know something more... to *know*. Alpert decided to follow him.

As they traveled barefoot from temple to temple, Bhagawan Das began teaching Alpert. They'd be sitting somewhere, R.D. has written, and Alpert would say, "Did I ever tell you about the time that Tim and I..."

And Bhagawan Das would say, "Don't think about the past. Just be here now."

Silence.

And Alpert would say, "How long do you think we're going to be on this trip?"

"Don't think about the future. Just be here now."

Alpert would say, "You know, I really feel crummy, my hips are hurting..."

"Emotions are like waves. Watch them disappear in the distance of the vast, calm ocean."

"He had," says Ram Dass, "just wiped out my whole game. That was it—that was my whole trip—emotions, and past experiences, and future plans."

With friend Judith Stanton: "I'd like to stay nice and middle class"

One day, after three months of blisters and dysentery, Alpert was taken, sulking and paranoid, to a tiny Hindu temple in the foothills of the Himalayas. Then, in a nearby field, Bhagawan Das led him to a fat little old man with LBJ ears and a Scotch-plaid blanket around his neck; "Maharaji," his devotees called him.*

The old man's name was Neemkaroli Baba, and like Tim Leary, he abruptly and dramatically changed Richard Alpert's life. Today, five years after Neemkaroli's death and 11 years after their first meeting, Ram Dass says not an hour passes that he does not think about his guru.

During that first encounter, Maharaji asked Alpert if he had been out under the stars the previous night (yes), if he had been thinking about his mother (yes), if his mother had gotten big in the stomach before she died (yes), if she had died of—and here he used the English word—"spleen" (yes!). Alpert's mind raced in search of an explanation, but there was none. "I felt like what happens when a computer is fed an insoluble problem," he wrote. "The bell rings and the red light goes on and the machine stops. And my mind just gave up. It burned out its circuitry, its zeal to have an explanation."

At the same moment, Alpert felt a massive wrenching in his chest, and he started to cry. "And I cried and I cried and I cried. And I wasn't happy and I wasn't sad. It was not that kind of crying. The only thing I could say was it felt like I was home. Like the journey was over."

The guru gave Alpert a new name—Ram Dass (Servant of God)—and Ram Dass gave the guru a megadose of very pure acid to see what would happen. Nothing happened; it was as though he'd never taken it. "Everywhere I had gone with LSD," says R.D., "my guru already was. He freed me from seeing it as a psychotic hallucination, because here was this guy living totally within that realm, this realm, all realms." Ram Dass stayed with Maharaji five months, studying, dieting, meditating, doing yoga exercises, and constantly rediscovering that Maharaji seemed to know everything in his head.

When he returned to the U.S. in early 1968, Ram Dass wore a long white gown, ceaselessly fingered his prayer beads, and set up a small altar wherever he went. His brother Bill nicknamed him Rum Dum.

"I was living in a cabin up on my father's land," says R.D., "and I was just way, way out there. I'd been on silence for six months, I was celibate, and after several long fasts, I weighed 140 pounds. I was absolutely in some other place. Everything was luminous and people would come see me and I would be worshipping them—it was very strange."

He came back to America, one writer said "like a spring uncoiled with tremendous force." When he gave his first back-from-India talk at Wesleyan that spring, he started at 7:30 p.m. and was still going strong at 4:30 the next morning. He gave an abbreviated four-hour version at a Pennsylvania seminar, and the Pacifica radio network began playing tapes of it on stations around the country. That summer, hundreds of young people drifted up to the Alpert farm in New Hampshire, where they sat on the sloping first fairway and listened to him groove on God. "When Ram Dass got going," wrote Robert Greenfield, "it felt like good acid running around your brain on a sunny day."

Once again, he was just a step ahead of the culture. Political action had about run its course; the war dragged on and Nixon was succeeding Johnson. Drugs could still get you through the night, but as Alpert had discovered earlier, one always came down. An entire generation was still seeking, and suddenly, from astrology to Zen, enlightenment was everywhere. The Beatles and Mia Farrow were discovering a Maharishi of their own, and for $150, Silva Mind Control guaranteed psychic powers in four days. In the middle of this spiritual smorgasbord was Baba ("respected father") Ram Dass, the minstrel of Om. With the publication in 1971 of *Be Here*

"I'm really not under the illusion that anything I do is important"

---

*In India, the title Maharaji—great king or wise one—is free for the taking by everyone from tea vendors to teen-age perfect masters.

Photograph by Doug Healey

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R.D., Joya and mutual friend Hilda Charlton: Creating her man

Now, he was catapulted out of Tim Leary's shadow for good. For many who had never read the real thing, R.D.'s primer became a bible.

The six years after he returned from India were a holy whirlwind of talks, tours, seminars, retreats; wherever he went, a scene formed around him. There were psychiatric grand rounds at Einstein Medical College, lectures at Menninger's and Spring Grove, and another popular book, *The Only Dance There Is.* When he needed a refresher, he returned to India for a year to be near his guru, returning again in 1973 for Neemkaroli's funeral.

Not everyone was entranced. "When I first heard him," recalls Judith Stanton, now a close friend, "I got up and left. I wanted him to be a holy man, but what I got was an entertainer and an audience wildly enthusiastic about a personality."

Then as now, Ram Dass leaned heavily upon the mystical religious philosophies of the East—Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism—and borrowed freely as well from Christian, Moslem and Hasidic sources. ("Whatever's chosen, I want to be part of it.") From these traditions, and from his own psychedelic and mystical experiences, Ram Dass came to perceive the universe as a dynamic, seamless whole; behind our bodies, personalities and psychic differences, he said, we all share one cosmic consciousness.

R.D. recognizes that to many Americans, his spiritual pitch sounds like the psychobabblings of flower children. "It's funny to talk about God in the West," he says. "It's not that God is dead; it's just that God is not a viable concept." What prevents most people from recognizing their universality, he believes, is their preoccupation with the melodrama of their individual lives. But if we work to quiet the incessant chatter of our rational minds and stop clinging so to our egos, he says, we can begin making contact with our deepest, elemental intuitions. Ram Dass believes that every advancement in the human condition has come about by someone being a little more conscious of man's ultimate indivisibility.

> **He came to believe that Joya was the creative force of the universe —"Ms. Big"**

Whether it was consciousness, charisma or people's projections, Ram Dass was leaving an indelible imprint on thousands of lives. Even as he urged others to abandon their pursuits of power and glory, he was accumulating more and more of his own. Although he didn't feel like a holy man, much less a realized being, people were treating him like one, and he was letting them. The whole scene started to depress him.

By 1974 he had decided to return to India to clean up his act when, at a Pennsylvania motel where he had stopped to watch the Nixon impeachment hearings, he had a vision of Maharaji telling him to stick around—"your teachings will be right here." The next day a friend told him, "There is this woman I want you to meet," and they drove out to Brooklyn where, in the basement of her home, he met Joya Santanya.

"What the fuck do you want?" Joya asked as she came out of a rocklike trance. She was in her mid-30s and wore heavy false eyelashes, thick mascara, bracelets, rings and a low-cut dress. "An unusual looking woman," R.D. says, "but I'd given up having models about what packages the next message is supposed to come in." As Joya went into another, lighter trance, Maharaji seemed to speak through her, talking to Ram Dass of temple maintenance and other details she could not possibly have known. Ram Dass was astonished, and a few months later he moved to New York to study with her. Leary, Maharaji, now Joya... R.D. could follow as well as lead.

Joya Santanya, nee Joyce Green, was a Jewish mother with three children; she was married at 15 to an Italian Catholic businessman and had lived all her life in Brooklyn. She said that about a year earlier she had achieved sudden enlightenment in her bathtub while doing yogic breathing exercises learned at a Jack La Lanne health spa. Although Joya claimed to be totally untutored in spiritual matters, through her, for hours at a time, poured Biblical, Hasidic, Hindu and Buddhist teachings. With a scorching blend of spirituality, sexuality and chutzpah, she was attracting hundreds of seekers, many of them living in Joya houses in Queens.

But her number one student, and her number one catch, was Ram Dass. Joya demanded absolute surrender from her followers, and Ram Dass surrendered absolutely—"letting go," he later said, "of even my resistence to much of what seemed to go against common sense." He soon came to believe that Joya incorporated the creative force of the universe—"that she was Ms. Big"—and he publicly declared her an enlightened being. "My teacher sometimes bleeds a quart a day right from the mouth," he reported, "and it's horrible to behold."

One devotee called Joya's teaching methods "loving persecution." "She knew just what she was doing," says Ram Dass. "She pushed me right to the edges of where I was tight and afraid. One day, she said, okay, just for fun I'm going to take you to some new levels—just look into my eyes. And she took me to a level that was so cold, so impersonal, that I didn't care about anybody in the universe. Then she said, okay, enough

Photograph by Peter Simon

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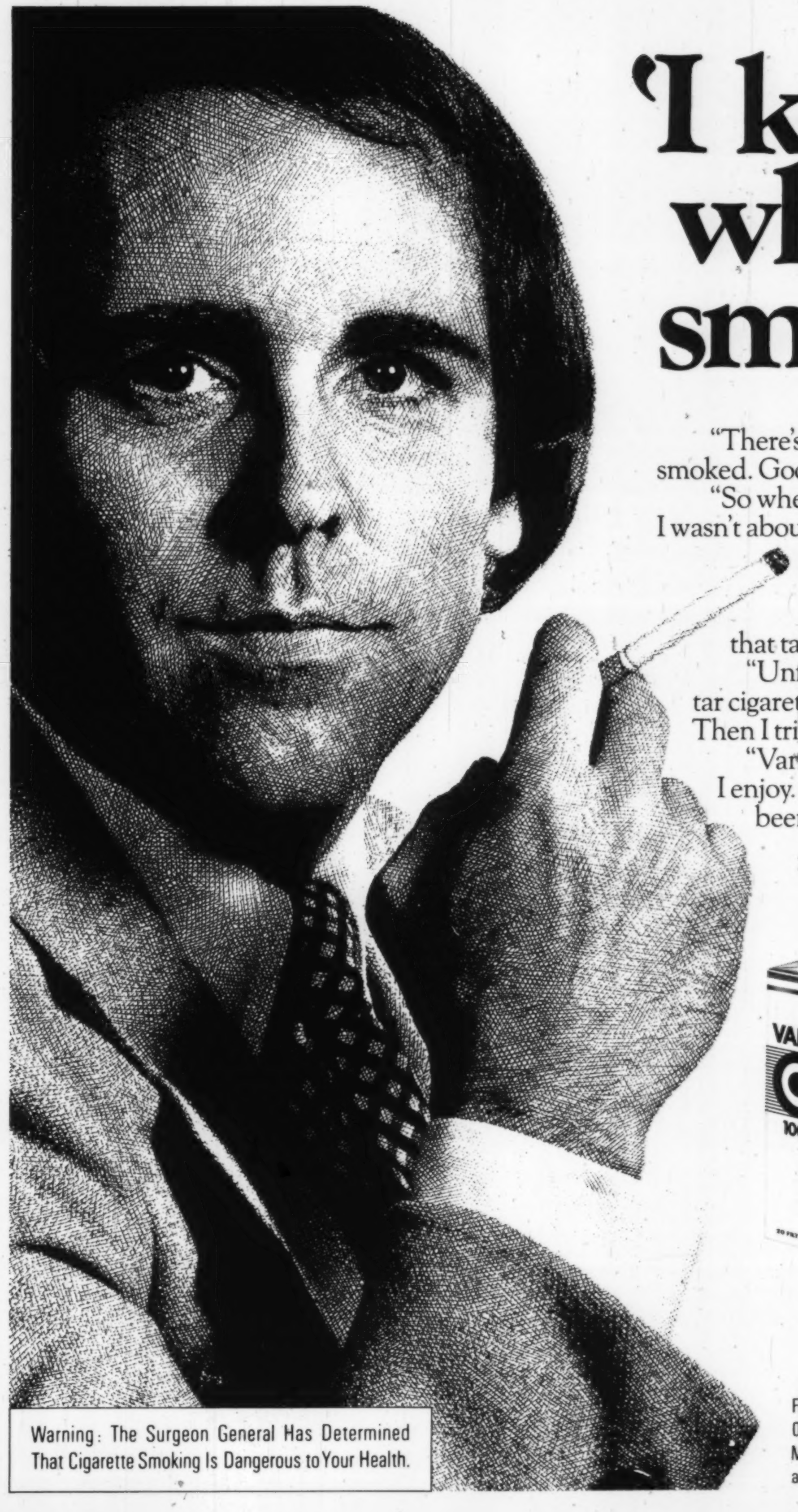

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"There's only one reason I ever smoked. Good taste.

"So when I switched to low tar, I wasn't about to give that up. If you don't smoke for taste what else is there?

"But there was all that talk about tar.

"Unfortunately, most low tar cigarettes tasted like nothing. Then I tried Vantage.

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Vincent Dougherty

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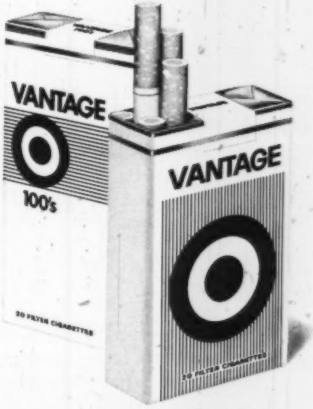

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for today, come on down, and I said screw you. She said, if you don't come down, I can't go on living. I said that's your problem, and at that point she fell to the ground. People came running over, and she was ashen gray; there was no heartbeat, and everybody started screaming, 'She's dead, she's dead.' I was watching all this from this Olympian height when the thought got through that this being had given up her life for me, and the power of that sacrifice pulled me back down into my heart. And tears are starting to stream down my face, and they're all holding her, she's completely ashen, and I'm looking at this person who has died for me, and she opens one eye and winks at me. Okay? Do you see how the game was being played?"

All the while, Joya was telling everyone that Ram Dass was to become the great spiritual teacher of his age. And in the small private classes she told him to hold in New York and Boston, he was acting like he believed it. "She made all Maharaji's followers worship me, you know, touch my feet and do all this kind of stuff. It wasn't my style, it wasn't me, but soon I was telling people, do this, do that, believing I was going to become what she said I was going to become. She was creating her man." Like Joya, R.D. was demanding that his students remain strictly *bramacharya*. Celibate.

Ram Dass had a new guru, and many of his old followers were flocking to her; that was news enough on the holy circuit, but nothing compared to the subsequent rumor that Ram Dass and Joya were sleeping together. Sweet Jesus!

Ram Dass' sex life had never been simple. In college and for years thereafter, he was gay posing as straight. "It was one-night stands, men's rooms in parks, and all the horror of that world," he says. Whenever he took acid, it seemed obvious to him that gay was not the way God meant it, but when he came back down, gay was what he remained.

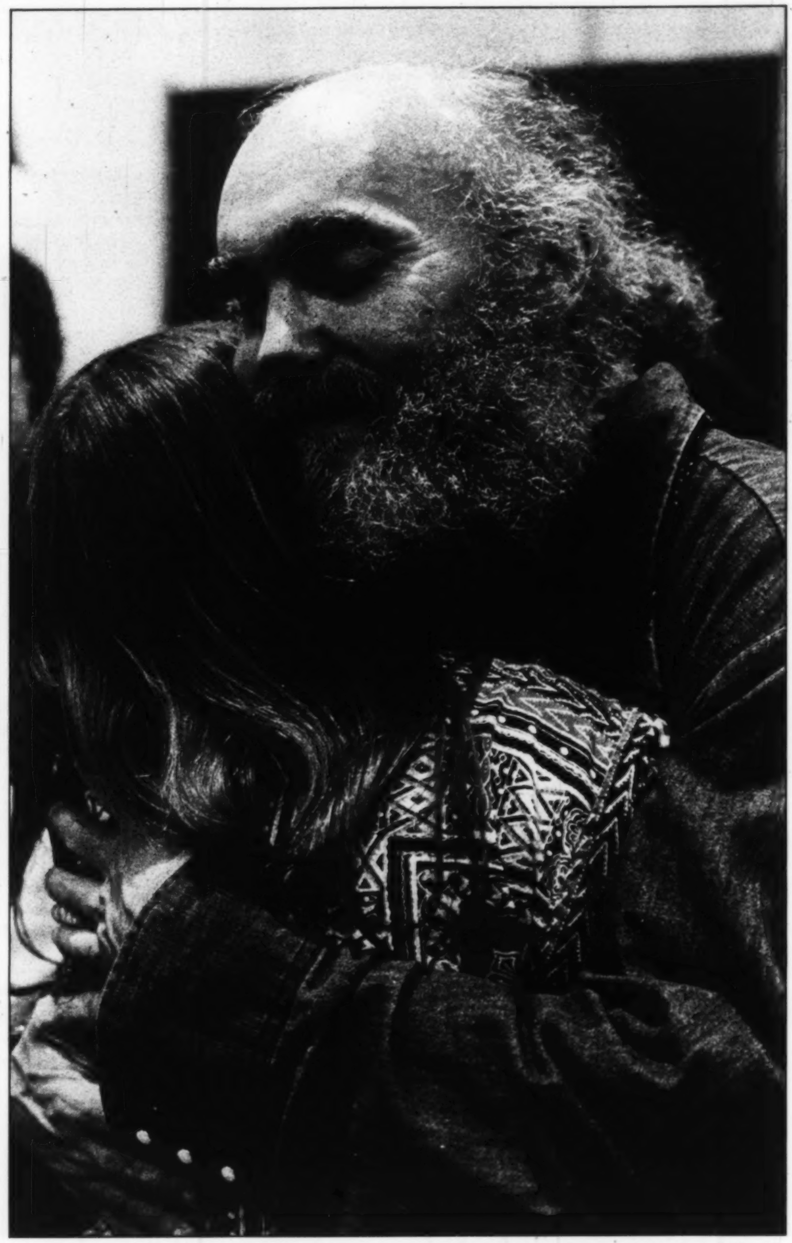
Ram Dass was still struggling with his sexual identity when he met Joya, and Joya, he says, was prepared to set him straight. "I plunged into the tornado."

Joya vigorously denies ever having made love to Ram Dass. "I kissed him a few times," she has said, "but that's all. Ram Dass is an angry little boy who wanted sex and couldn't get it." R.D. remembers it differently:

"The way Joya presented it to me was, this is a special, secret teaching that you alone are ready for; what all these other people need is to be celibate and what *you* need is to work through your sexual hang-up. Her statement all the time when we were making love was, look, I have no feelings in my body at all, this has nothing to do with me, these are all spiritual practices designed to liberate you. I certainly didn't lust after Joya, and whatever else my training is, adultery has never been a route to God as far as I've known. The idea of me being 'the other man' is so bizarre, so alien to who I think I am and the kind of human relationships I've always had.

"Sometimes I'd be walking up the stairs behind her to her sister's apartment early in the morning, and she had her make-up kit with her and her cassette tape recorder and her blanket and all this stuff she'd carry; and we'd run into the janitor, who knew that her sister had just left, and there would be that kind of janitorial wink about this kind of game. And it used to blow my mind. I'd think, what a far-out thing, what am I doing in Brooklyn with this married woman going up to her sister's apartment at 7:30 a.m. to make love?!"

"He lied through his teeth to all sorts of people about his relationship with Joya," says David McClelland. "It's a flaw which is the flip side of his great power and strength. You can call it lying, you can also call it recreating reality; he's a person who likes to create dramas. In all the years I've known him, he's been good at doing that, and he will always do it in my opinion. His love of drama, his love of stories, his charm, his wit, his self-abdication, his desire to better people, this terrific guilt trip he's on all the time—that's all the same. One reason he's a person of such tremendous value to hundreds of thousands of people is that they find him a very use-



Photograph by Calvin Fentress

ful representation of their own hopes and weaknesses."

After 15 months, the tornado had become too much for Ram Dass. He wasn't much liking Joya, he wasn't much liking himself. Amid an exodus of about 100 disillusioned followers, he withdrew his seal of enlightenment and confessed that all he'd ever really seen of that gusher of blood was some pinkish liquid Joya spit into a tissue. (Bleeding gums, suggested some observers.)

Late that bicentennial summer, Ram Dass told his students they were on their own again; he'd fallen for Joya, he said, because he was so spiritually greedy, and he apologized to them all. "I was totally seduced by the whole melodrama, like a tourist, open-mouthed, watching a fakir do the Indian rope trick."

"When I first met him," says Judith Stanton, "there was an arrogance in Ram Dass, but it melted away during his time with Joya. He became much warmer, much less rigid, more human. It also made him very wary about presenting himself as more than he is in anyway."

From India to Thailand to Bali to Maui, he roamed... California, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Spain... quieting his mind, cooling out. It was a relief to be just another human being again. He was tired of people treating him symbolically. Yet who was he, he wondered, what was his role? He was still wondering this spring as his odyssey of discovery headed home.

"Enjoy yourself," reads the small note Ram Dass props beside him just before each performance, but at New York's Palladium it's a struggle. His words come haltingly at first, and he pulls the brim of his floppy brown hat low over his eyes. "I don't know why we meet," he says plaintively, "What nostalgia is it?"

In the home stretch of the tour, he is personifying what before he only flippantly proclaimed: nobody special. "I'm really not under the illusion," he tells his New York audience, "that anything I do is important." With each stop, he plays less and less to the crowd. "Whatever expectations you have of this moment are yours."

Certainly he is no longer a help to those who come seeking 10 easy steps to divinity. Diet? He watches what he eats, but is not beyond passing up bean sprouts for a grilled cheese sandwich and a chocolate shake. Sex? Ram Dass says he hasn't made love with anyone of either sex for a couple of years, not because he thinks abstinence will get him to God any faster, but because the sexual dance seems irrelevant now—"the whole thing has lost its tremendous power." He tells his listeners, "You don't have to give up anything, you don't *not* have to give up anything. Just follow your heart."

The distinctions between performer and audience, teacher and students, feel flimsier to him all the time, and he does what he can to fuzz them; before the doors open each evening, he asks that the house lights be brightened and the spots on him dimmed. After a long burst of applause in New York, he tells the audience he doesn't know how to handle it; if we are all one, he asks, why applaud ourself? Even his own words have begun to feel perfunctory to him. "I know I should take questions," he says near the end of the evening, "but somehow it feels like all that needs to be said has been said. Any question you have, you have the answer to."

Each night now as he meets with his public, the nature of their encounter seems less clear to him. "They expect me to be a sweet, gentle guy who won't push their egos too far, who is so much like them that they can hang around me without discomforting themselves. But I got impatient with the conspiracy we'd all entered as to how this game would be played. Suddenly I don't want to play it that way. I'm not tame any more. I'm not going to be Big Daddy."

About all he can see to do now is be as straight as he can. His guru, he keeps remembering, told him always to tell the truth. "I used to exaggerate things in my stories," he says, "but I began seeing myself as a liar, and I really don't want to be that person any more." At a recent appearance in Montreal, he was introduced by a clergyman who made a long pitch for a pet institute; said R.D. as soon as he got the mike, "To talk about God and then talk about the Institute as if God is backing the Institute is nonsense. God doesn't care about the Institute." Two weeks later, he told a New York audience of holistic healing partisans that their field is "ripe for charlatans." "Why is it," he asked Werner Erhard, "that all your est people look like humanoids?" "You're very slow," he tells a sedate capital audience after dedicating the evening to Lenny Bruce. "Washington, you've blown it again."

He worries about his growing directness—"when the truth hurts, is that sympathy for all beings?"—but insists that anything less costs too much in the end. "If the spiritual scene in America is going to amount to more than a hill of beans," he has said, "it requires the toughness to keep the scene straight. Total truth is the only route."

Boston is tour's end, and the crowd that comes in from the cold rain is the youngest of the trip. They cover the scuffed floor of the B.U. gym with their blankets and sprawl across the back bleachers. There are a couple of dogs and a dozen babies. It is a Ram Dass audience of five years ago.

All through the tour he has asked for irreverence; in Boston he gets it. "I'm just passing show," he says, "forget me," and the audience—singing, dancing, talking—almost does. Once, after a break, when the giddy crowd takes a long time to settle, R.D.'s arctic glance suggests that perhaps the demystification process has gone too far for his taste. Even Ram Dass sometimes forgets that it's all a dream within a dream.

His thin Linus blanket hangs loosely from his shoulders, and between its folds a brilliant sun god stretches across his chest. "I have no idea who I am, what I'm doing here, what's our business," he says. "I'm listening to hear what part I should play—*I* don't know."

Even Ram Dass sometimes forgets that it's all a dream within a dream

I don't know—it's his refrain of '78... "I don't know if I'm going to be enlightened this lifetime or in 60 billion lifetimes or if I've fallen off the path... Was I just a fad? Is it over? Is it just beginning? I don't know."

And what next? Should he live among beggars in Delhi? Should he become Billy Graham? Should he shut up? Ten years ago, Maharaji told him he should be like Gandhi, and over canapes at an L.A. conference on children early this year, someone else told Ram Dass the same thing.

"I was enraged—he was touching a place in me where I'm very vulnerable. There's a part of me that would like to stay nice and middle class, get a farm, have a library and a fireplace and a dog, but I can feel also this thing..." His voice trails off.

"The whole business of consciousness changes has been transformed into a mass phenomenon and I'm not interested in mass phenomena. I'm not interested in riding the big wave. I'd rather not be acceptable, loved old Mr. Chips; I'd much rather be a little further out in the culture." What role lies out there for him now he isn't sure—some amalgam, he suspects, of social philosopher, political activist, mystic and devotee of God. "I feel I have a very definite function, I just don't understand it yet."

"Many suns and moons have passed/ in the ocean of my heart," he and his friends sing on closing night in Boston. That's how it feels to Ram Dass—just another round, just another plane. "All I can do is listen to my heart, fall on my face, look a little sheepish and get on with it." The stairway to the stars is dark, he knows, and enlightenment can come as easily slipping on a banana peel as in a Himalayan cave—or in a red flip-top second-hand van with Fleetwood Mac spilling from the stereo and the sweet confusion of the universe coursing through his veins. ●

IN PURSUIT OF LONGEVITY

Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow — if scientists can find a way to check aging — you may live forever

by Ruth Rosenbaum

"Death should be an option, not a necessity," insists Dr. Bernard Strehler, University of Southern California biologist and ground-breaking researcher in the field of gerontology.

"I'm appalled," says philosopher-author F.M. Esfandiary, "at how passive people are in accepting mortality.If it is natural to get old and die, then to hell with nature! We have to rise above the natural and the human—let's refuse to die!...If you're here 20 years from now, you will probably be here 200 years from now, 200 centuries, forever..."

And, states Alex Comfort, one of the world's foremost gerontologists as well as a popular author (*The Joy of Sex*), "The control of the human rate of aging is going to happen...How soon depends solely upon the social pressure for research..."

Death is used to such battle cries—Ponce de Leon, seeking the fountain of youth; medieval alchemists grinding out the "elixir of life"; even a reasonable man like Descartes, convinced before his death at 54 that self-discipline and scholarly pursuits would ensure him at least 100 years, perhaps eternity—all silenced in due time.

But the new slogans may have more clout to them. Today's marauders are competent scientists—biochemists, geneticists, pathologists, endocrinologists, neurologists. Armed with the weapons of modern technology, dispatching legions of rats and mice fortified and manipulated to resist death, they have abandoned the myths about prolonging life that encumbered their predecessors. Now, no pill, no simple procedure like transplanting testicles from monkeys to men (the rage in the twenties), no particular food or special exercise, not even traditional medical science can be expected to extend the maximum human life span—that point somewhere in the late 90s or early 100s at which the oldest of any civilization, Americans, Hunzans and Soviet Georgians alike, drop off. It is, instead, a painstaking investigation of the aging process itself and of the mechanisms of death which has led some scientists to believe that the extension of the human life span by several hundred years is a distinct and not-too-distant possibility.

"We are now near the practical limit of our ability to increase [even] the average life span through conventional disease-oriented research," reports the American Aging Association, a national scientific society. "The only untried approach...is to endeavor to slow down the aging process."

A Sanguine Subject

Elderly folks in the Middle Ages, drinking and bathing in fresh young blood, suspected it; vampires instinctively knew it; and now scientists have to some extent confirmed it: Young blood can revitalize old animals and even prolong their life.

In a handful of labs around the country, man-made Siamese twins are being used to determine if a transmissible "youth factor" exists in the blood of young animals. In a procedure called parabiosis, the circulatory systems of two genetically identical animals, one old, one young, are joined by a bridge of tissue. Among the first parabiosis experiments were those performed on cockroaches in the sixties by Dietrich Bodenstein at the Gerontology Research Center in Baltimore, Maryland. When old cockroaches were hitched to young, they were able to regrow lopped-off limbs—a capacity normally reserved for the young. More recently, in experiments with hundreds of rats, Dr. Frederic Ludwig of the University of California at Irvine has found that middle-aged rats attached to young ones live longer than normal.

But the most important clue to what is actually going on in Ludwig's experiments comes from observing not the old, but the young animals: Compared to a group of unattached young mice used as controls, the young parabiotic partners aged and died sooner. It appears, then, that the blood of older animals may contain an "aging factor" whose effects are diluted when mixed with young blood, and which in turn adversely affects the young animal's health. Some researchers simply feel there is an equalizing process at work, whereby supplies of hormones, enzymes and some cell populations that normally decline with age are bolstered in the older and reduced in the younger animals.

Yet a totally different type of experiment, one reminiscent of the old custom of blood-letting to rid the body of disease, lends support to the theory of an aging factor in blood, specifically in the blood plasma.

Dr. Norman Orentreich, clinical professor of dermatology at the New York University School of Medicine and originator of the hair transplant, is studying a technique that he feels stimulates and rejuvenates both the body's protein production and circulatory function. In this technique, called plasmapherisis, blood is removed, centrifuged and returned to the body without the plasma, which contains the blood's protein. Plasmapherisis may, by removing aged protein, stimulate the body to manufacture new protein. The process has been shown to favorably affect cholesterol metabolism and to slow the aging of collagen, which makes up 30 to 40 percent of the body's protein. The deterioration of collagen is cited by some researchers as a significant marker in the aging cycle.

Though Orentreich now shies away from publicity—"I'd rather not generate enthusiasm prematurely; I want to be absolutely sure of what I've got"—Patrick McGrady, Jr., in his 1968 book *The Youth Doctors*, alludes to having witnessed a "mangy old mongrel dog ... brought to bushy tailed adolescence" through this blood-cleansing process. Orentreich now uses the technique on human volunteers, including one subject whom he has plasmapherisized 500 times in the past 10 years.

"All I can tell you now," says Oren-

Illustrations by Henrik Drescher

treich, "is that he's in good health—there's nothing wrong with him." Incidentally, he suggests that since any routine removal of blood, within reason, has a stimulating effect on the body, those who give blood regularly may be rewarded in *this* life.

Seminal Theories

Blood did not always rank as *the* primary matter of life or death. In Eastern cultures as far back as 2000 B.C., it was semen which was thought to have life-extending as well as life-giving properties. The ancient Chinese and Hindus consumed raw tiger testicles as a rejuvenating agent. But it was the tenth century B.C. Taoist alchemists who, convinced it would assure them immortality, developed the art of conserving semen, an art still practiced by many Eastern sects.

"He whose genital gate is closed enjoys long life," wrote Tao Master Hsu Ching Yang. The point was to retain the "generative force," or semen, in the body "for purification and transmutation into positive vitality to... restore the primal immortal state." Taoists developed elaborate breathing and mental exercises by which the semen was thought to be redirected up the spinal cord to the brain. The more they exercised, the longer they were to live—or as another master put it: "He who is able to have coitus several tens of times in a single night without allowing his essence to escape will be cured of all maladies and will have his longevity extended. If he changes his partner ten times, that is supremely excellent."

An interesting coincidence of Eastern and Western thinking resulted in the vasectomy, which for many years was a sought-after rejuvenation technique based on the idea of retention of the "male essence." In 1911, Dr. Eugen Steinach, an Austrian physiologist and endocrinologist, discovered that after severing the sperm duct of an old, impotent rat, it appeared rejuvenated, mounting a female 19 times in 15 minutes. Steinach then figured that tying off the canal through which sperm flows in men would cause it to back up and stimulate a greater flow of the male hormone into the blood. His first human subject, a middle-aged coachman, old before his time, also appeared to be rejuvenated: Steinach wrote of his post operative, unwrinkled face and his bearing, like a "youthful man at the height of his vitality." Soon many cultured Viennese men, including Sigmund Freud, underwent the operation.

Unfortunately, Steinach, a serious and scrupulous researcher, became tainted by an emerging trend: In the 1920s, the field of aging research was transformed into a Bosch-like landscape, casting modern gerontology in an aura of disrepute it has not completely shaken. There was, for instance, Dr. Serge Voronoff, who, while a physician in an Egyptian harem, noticed that eunuchs died earlier and appeared to age much faster than normal men. Soon after, the boulevards of Paris were filled with hundreds of with-it, well-to-do men walking around with chimpanzee, gibbon or orangutan testicles grafted to their own, a rejuvenation method of Veronoff's creation.

"...A man with the white ring of senility around the eye," Voronoff wrote, "a man who walks feebly, sits listlessly in his chair, will, after 'les greffes testiculaires' walk upright and with vigor, renew the firmness of the flesh, and function like a man of middle age."

Some 2,000 men were lured, paying $5,000 a pair, some even returning for retreads after a year or two, though Voronoff claimed the effect would last for 15 years. Voronoff's business came to a halt when a virulent strain of syphillis spread through the chimpanzee ranks and on to the graftees. But his graft had already spread to America, where goat testicles were transplanted to humans under such unsanitary conditions that many patients died. (Today scientists believe that a properly performed graft could at best have had the same effect as a single injection of testosterone, or one or two days of increased energy, before the animal cells would be rejected by the body.)

Ironically, there are now indications that the "female essence" may actually be a key to delaying the aging process. One theory has it that the number of eggs to be released from the ovary during a woman's lifetime—the number of menstrual periods—is genetically programmed at birth. If a certain number of periods are skipped or if the onset of menstruation is postponed, menopause may be delayed, along with its age-associated symptoms and hormonal changes.

The Immunity Factor

Meanwhile, in this decade, gland transplants of a different sort are being attempted in aging research, with exciting implications for health and life extension. To the relief of the scientists involved, the gland in focus, the thymus, is one without exploitable connotations; in fact, until recently many doctors and scientists thought of it as a vestigial organ like the appendix. Now, this small gland (located behind the breastbone), which secretes hormones regulating the functions of the cells of the immune system, is considered the "master gland of immunity." As we age, particularly after puberty, the thymus shrinks and produces less of the hormone needed to maturate two immune system cells: T-cells, free-ranging lymphocytes which attack invading cells, and B-cells, which manufacture specific antibodies to fight certain types of foreign cells, or antigens.

Takashi Makinodan of the VA Wadsworth Hospital Center in Los Angeles has found that, by grafting the thymus of young mice to old mice, it is possible to restore the immune function of the old mice and greatly extend their life span. In another experiment, Makinodan took T-cells from young mice who had been exposed to a particular bacteria, injected the cells into old mice, and found that they were then able to resist very high doses of that bacteria. Makinodan hopes that in the future we humans may be able to similarly benefit from our own youthful immune cells. He envisions a sort of self-made cell therapy—lymphocyte savings banks, made up of cells extracted and frozen when we're young which we could later withdraw to help fight disease as we age.

And Donner Denckla, a biologist at the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, formerly at the Roche Institute of Molecular Biology in Nutley, New Jersey, has said, "If we can reproduce the immune competence of a 10-year old, when man is at his healthiest, your expected life span will go up to 200, 300 or even 400 years."

Though it is too soon to determine the effect on human life span of thymus transplants and injections of thymic hormones, they have a clearly positive effect on the functioning of the immune system. In an operation performed by Dr. Richard Hong, professor of pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin Medical Center, the thymus of a normal child who had died was transplanted into a 21-month-old child with severe combined immunodeficiency disease, which usually results in early death from even slight exposure to infectious agents. After the thymus transplant, the child survived a bout of pneumonia and exhibited increased levels of immune lymphocytes. (She died, however, of a virus infection, 18 months later.)

At 18 clinical centers in the United States and Europe, a hormonal secretion of the thymus, thymosin, first isolated by Dr. Allan Goldstein of the George Washington University School of Medicine and Dr. Abraham White of Stanford University, has been tried with some success on children with immune deficiency diseases and on patients with far-advanced cancers. In cancer patients, injections of thymosin seem to boost their immune system's functioning and help them resist the detrimental effects of radiation and chemotherapy. There is also the possibility that thymosin buffers the immune system against certain carcinogens that are thought to suppress T-cells and B-cells. A decline in thymosin levels may be largely responsible for the increased incidence of cancer and susceptibility to infectious disease characteristic of aging. This natural decline is especially rapid between the ages of 25 and 45, but since lymphocyte cells maturated through the action of thymosin live 10 to 30 years, effects of the decline do not usually become evident till age 50 or so.

Considered as important in aging research as the decrease in immune activity is an increase in autoimmune reactions—that is, when the body's lymphocytes attack perfectly healthy cells. Scientists speculate that either aging cells undergo changes that cause the lymphocytes to mistake them for foreign invaders, or the aging lymphocytes themselves exhibit faulty judgment. At the very least, a rise in autoimmunity further weakens an already declining immune system: As cells occupy themselves increasingly with attacks on their own kind, more foreign invaders can slip through and take hold unnoticed. Beyond that, the potential disruptive effects of excessive autoimmune reactions are far-ranging; it is even thought by some that arteriosclerotic plaques are a result of battle scars formed as the body's cells attack each other.

A link between rising autoimmunity and aging has been suggested by several experiments with lowering core body temperature. In some cold-blooded animals, a body temperature reduction has resulted in as much as a tenfold increase in lifespan. Dr. Roy Walford, a UCLA pathologist and a major proponent of the immune theory of aging, remarks that this longevity effect cannot simply be a matter of a slow down in metabolic rate, as was first supposed. In experiments he conducted with fish, lowering the water temperature five or six degrees Centigrade not only doubled their life span but also resulted in an accelerated growth rate and greater than normal size. According to Walford, lower temperature increases longevity by suppressing autoimmune reactions, an idea supported by the fact that reduced temperature has the greatest impact on life span if introduced late in an animal's life, when such reactions would normally increase.

So far there is no means to safely and permanently lower body temperature in warm-blooded animals without reducing them to a state akin to hibernation. Dr. Barnett Rosenberg of Michigan State University, who is attempting to develop a drug that could do the trick with no adverse effects, has estimated, on the basis of several experiments with mice, that lowering the body's temperature by six degrees Centigrade could extend human life span to 200 years. (Marijuana and certain tranquilizers are among the few drugs which can lower the body temperature in mammals. But the lowering is only temporary, and, as Dr. Walford explains, a kind of "immunity" results—the more taken, the less the lowering effect each time.)

What is most significant about the immune system's relation to aging is that it appears to be one of the first important functions to decline. Postponing its decline, then, could have a most immediate effect on longevity. "If we're interpreting our results correctly, says Walford, "and the immune system is as fundamental a factor in aging as we think, then we're only a few years away from being able to manipulate the system in such a way as to achieve a significant life span increase."

It is a frustrating irony to many gerontologists that the government allots only $37 million to the National Institute on Aging, which was established in 1974, compared to the $1.3 billion for the two institutes in charge of fighting cancer and heart disease. They believe that the key to controlling degenerative diseases, including cancer and heart disease, lies in an understanding of the aging process itself. Nearly every agent proven effective in retarding aging in laboratory experiments also reduces or postpones tumor incidence; many improve circulatory function. And, scientists point out, even with the elimination of all cancer and all heart disease due to arteriosclerosis, only eight years would be added to life expectancy.

Chemical Handcuffs?

To many researchers, aging is itself a disease, with predictable symptoms and a specific cause; as with other diseases, it could be "cured" by bolstering the body's defenses against the cause. The causative factor is assumed to be at work from the time of birth, wreaking final destruction through an accumulation of damage to the body.

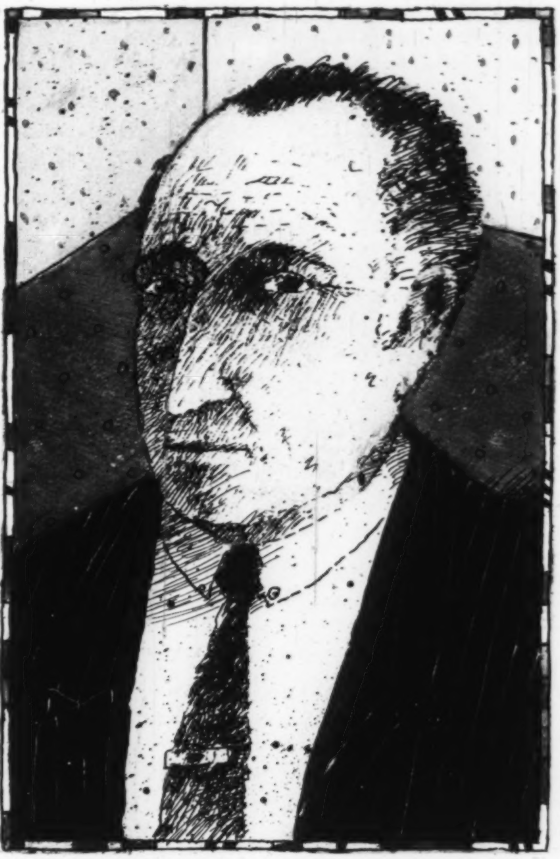
One of the 'accumulation' theories of aging, crosslinkage, was first suggested in 1942 by Johan Bjorksten of the Bjorksten Research Foundation in Madison, Wisconsin. Bjorksten asserts that crosslinkage—the joining of two long molecules by a small one, which inhibits their normal functioning somewhat like a chemical handcuff—can "account entirely for the observed progressive disruption of all life processes with aging."

Crosslinkage is the chemical basis for tanning and for manufacturing some types of surgical sutures, but in the body it is usually a random, unwanted occurrence caused by certain chemical agents. Among these are free radicals (highly unstable atoms, or molecules with an electron broken away, which combine with nearly any molecule that crosses their path), antibody-antigen precipitates left over from autoimmune responses, and various trace metals.

Extensively crosslinked protein molecules, nucleic acids and other vital molecules not only fail to function properly but, because they can't be broken down biologically, block the functioning of other molecules as well. This may account for the progressively reduced elasticity of all tissues—muscles, arteries, skin, glands. "No other mechanism," says Bjorksten, "can cause as much damage with as small an input."

(Vying for this nefarious honor are free radicals and somatic mutations, the focus of other aging theories. By latching onto essential molecules and altering their chemical behavior, free radicals, some researchers say, may throw enough wrenches into the system to bring about its eventual collapse. Somatic mutations, minute changes in the DNA of cell nuclei continually caused by environmental factors, result in faulty duplication of cell material and possibly, when enough errors have accumulated, in breakdowns in the body's functioning.)

In youth, says Bjorksten, the effects of crosslinkage can sometimes be corrected by cellular enzymes, but with age they become increasingly difficult, even impossible, to reverse. Bjorksten is now working on an "enzyme cocktail" which could repair crosslinkage damage even in elderly people. Meanwhile he advocates "delaying actions" such as vitamin therapy, "to give some of us the few extra years necessary" to continue the tedious work toward a long-term solution to aging. (See "Vitamins," *New Times*, July 24, 1978.)



Nearly every researcher in the field takes 100 to 200 milligrams of vitamin E as a daily safeguard. Its antioxidant activity is known to inhibit free radical reactions, and in turn, some crosslinkage formation. Dr. Denham Harman, a founder of the American Aging Association in Omaha, Nebraska, and Dr. Jaime Miquel of NASA's Ames Laboratory in Mountain View, California, have found that antioxidants such as vitamin E, BHT and 2-mercaptoethylamine extend the average life span of mice and fruit flies. Dr. Harman believes that 5 to 15 healthy years could be added to human life with "a properly selected natural diet and one or more free radical reaction inhibitors."

But there is a problem with vitamin E: determining optimum dosage. As early as 1946, experiments suggested that extremely high doses might make the organism as a whole lethargic by inhibiting even those oxidative reactions essential to vital energy-producing processes. An experiment by Dr. Aloys L. Tappel of the University of California at Davis actually showed a decrease in the life span of mice fed high doses of vitamin E. Furthermore, researchers suspect that too much vitamin E may even inhibit reactions that would otherwise destroy certain carcinogens.

Vitamin C, another antioxidant, has been found to boost the functioning of the immune system by researchers at the National Cancer Institute, as well as by Dr. Linus Pauling and other independent scientists. Yet again, optimum dosage is unknown. In fact, some recent experiments with fruit flies and guinea pigs, reported in *Experimental Gerontology*, demonstrated that high doses of vitamin C may hasten the aging process. (While extrapolating from the results of animal experiments to humans is of uncertain value, it has been estimated that the dosage used in the fruit fly experiments was roughly equivalent to a human dosage of 5 to 10 grams a day, an amount downed by many health enthusiasts.)

A Switch in Time

A chicken-egg dilemma has confounded gerontologists since serious work began in the thirties: Are the adverse effects of free radicals, somatic mutations and crosslinkages, and the immune system's decline, the cause(s) of aging, or are they the results—symptoms of aging—all triggered by a more basic underlying mechanism? A growing number of scientists believe there may be a master switch that regulates and paces the life cycle, causing at a certain programmed point in time the cells to become more vulnerable to mutagens and free radicals, and limiting their repair capacity. Where the switch is located, what flicks it on, is not yet known. But some researchers seem to have brushed against it; and without a precise understanding of the mechanism, they have been able to repeat experiments that seem to turn the switch off long enough to result in the greatest life span increases thus far achieved in laboratory animals.

The oldest pack of rats on record did not live in the pure mountain air of the Himalayas, but in Philadelphia, at the Institute for Cancer Research. There, placed on an extremely low-calorie but nutritionally adequate diet devised by Dr. Morris Ross, the animals survived an average of twice their normal life expectancy, some as long as 1,800 days, or the human equivalent of about 180 years. The animals grew more slowly, the onset of puberty was delayed, and the incidence of several age-related ailments such as heart and kidney disease and cancer was markedly lowered.

Dr. Paul Segall of the Department of Physiology-Anatomy of the University of California at Berkeley has been feeding rats a diet low both in calories and in tryptophan. (Tryptophan is an amino acid which is a precursor to production of serotonin, a brain neurotransmitter associated with sleepiness and control of manic-depressive states, and one which increases with age.) While Segall's rats did not live as long as Ross', the aging process was dramatically forestalled; some of the females were still giving birth at 28 months, an age when they would normally be dying.

Both Dr. Segall and Dr. Ross warn against applying their results to humans. More animals on these diets die young than those on normal diets, even though the ones that do survive live abnormally long. And Dr. Ross explains: "Our animals live in the laboratory and do not face the stresses we do or that animals do in the wild.... Also the human nervous system is very much influenced by the type of diet early in life."

Shifting the balance of the brain's neurotransmitters may be crucial to life extension. If, as some scientists envision it, there is a clock mechanism in the brain which ticks off major phases of the life cycle, and if this clock itself is paced by certain concentrations of neurotransmitters (which change with age in animals and humans), then altering the normal concentrations could jam the clock, at least temporarily. In the calorie restriction studies, the postponement of puberty is evidence that normal brain chemistry has been disturbed. And in experiments that lower core body temperature—the only means other than calorie restriction known to extend *maximum* life span—it is possible that neurotransmitters in the hypothalamus, the gland which regulates body temperature, are thrown off balance and, in turn, send a new set of instructions to the pituitary, which is in charge of metabolism, growth rate and, perhaps, the aging rate.

Dr. Donner Denckla's work suggests that at some time in adult life the pituitary releases a particular hormone that may trigger the cascade of symptoms associated with aging. Some scientists call it the "death hormone," and it may be released as early as puberty, when, having primed us for our reproductive duty to our species, nature can then afford to begin phasing us out. Denckla calls the hormone DECO (decreasing oxygen consumption hormone) and is working on isolating it from other pituitary hormones, his eventual goal being to supply the body with a chemical agent that would block the "death hormone" and no other.

Already, by removing the pituitary gland from laboratory rats and giving back the known pituitary hormones, Denckla has achieved reversal of aging in 12 different functions in his rats. "These animals die looking perfectly gorgeous," he says. "They're so vigorous and healthy even two hours before they die that you can't say they're sick."

A recent investigation into the unique problems of the female octopus by Jerome Wodinsky of Brandeis University lends support to Denckla's theory. Shortly before and continuing after egg-laying, the female octopus loses her appetite and practically stops eating; she dies about 10 days after the eggs hatch. In his experiment, Wodinsky excised the octopus' optic glands, which are connected neurally to its brain and often compared to the vertebrate pituitary. The effect on longevity was dramatic: The longest-lived of the octopi with both optic glands removed survived over five times longer than the longest-lived of the control group. Some attained a higher weight than is typical for the species, and all resumed mating. It appears that a secretion from the octopus' optic gland affects cellular activity related to sexual behavior, reproduction and longevity, much as a pituitary hormone may in humans.

Even supposing that Denckla is correct—that a genetic code switched on by a pituitary secretion causes aging and death—it still may not follow that removing the "death hormone" would keep the switch off forever. Denckla himself has suggested that nature may have too great a stake in a constant turnover within a species to have made death so vulnerable. There may exist a fail-safe system of alarms within each cell, set to signal it to shut down just in case some scientist or random mutation manages to lock the pituitary death trigger. In fact, the cells of some insects and plants contain a gene that, at a certain time, causes synthesis of a mutagenic substance within the cell, resulting in reproduction of defective cells and eventual death of the organism.

Faustian Fantasies?

Despite the discouraging notion, even probability, that nature has backup death troops, several scientists are convinced that technology will be able to pick them off one by one, or at least parry them for an extended period of time.

Dr. Bernard Strehler, University of Southern California biologist and gerontologist, believes that certain genes crucial to the efficient production of cellular protein switch off at some point in our lives and that someday genetic engineering may turn them back on again.

"There is no principle in nature that says living things cannot go on functioning indefinitely in optimum health," says Strehler. And he finds a concrete cause for optimism in some recent studies of evolutionary changes in the human life span. G. Sacher, a physiologist, and Richard Cutler, a biochemist, have calculated approximately how many genes must have undergone mutation during the several million years it took for the maximum human life span to increase from 25 to 40 years to the current 90 to 100 years or so. They concluded that only between 10 and 200 critical mutations could have occurred, "probably closer to ten," says Strehler. "The implications of this conclusion," he believes, "are startling with respect to the further extension of the healthy human life span." Short of another life-extending mutation, Strehler suggests that chemical interference with the rates of some of the genetically coded destructive processes such as, perhaps, cross-linkage or immune system decline, "could cause a substantial slowing down of the aging process by the year 2000."

There is a catch, however, in that neither genetic nor chemical manipulation would result, unaided, in immortality. In time, any system would be subject to the adverse effects of wear and tear.

Still, there is hope. "In the near future," says Strehler, "it will certainly be feasible to replace all parts of the body *except* the one most essential to the continuity of the individual consciousness—the brain and nerve cells, with their particular relationships and memories which give each person his unique identity."

That's where his machine comes in. Stored atop a tall dining room cabinet, safe from the flood waters which often reach his home on Malibu Lake, is Strehler's hope for immortality—a mass of crisscrossing wires on a yard-square wooden base, "an electrical model which accounts for how the brain stores and retrieves memory on the basis of cues. . . ." Strehler explains that "if the brain's method of coding messages is understood, then it may be possible to transfer the sum of a brain's message patterns—the essence of selfness—then make a clonal copy of oneself, and feed the information from the machine into the clone. That is about the only kind of immortality I think one can look forward to."

How far forward?

"I think there is no more than a 1 to 20 percent chance it could happen within the next 50 to 100 years; most scientists think it will be another 1,000 years before we know how the brain works, but then, who could have believed we'd be making genes even 20 years ago?" Just in case, when Strehler had his gall bladder removed four years ago, he made sure that some of his cells were removed and frozen, material for a future clonal recipient of his personality.

Even if you could hook up to Strehler's machine now, there would still be the problem of when to "educate" your clone. If you did it soon after birth, you'd have an infant crawling around with the thoughts and memories of, say, a 50-year-old, that is, if a baby's brain were even capable of receiving all that input. But if you waited till the clone was adult-sized, wouldn't he have picked up enough of his own identity that, with the infusion of "you," he would become a split or very confused personality? And whose birth trauma would shape his psychological development?

For those who would rather hold on to their identities and not risk living on as the third face of some unknown Eve, a group of 15 U.S. scientists is working on a different approach to guaranteeing life extension: a "capitate life support system." Imagine your head planted atop a refrigerator-sized compartment for as many years or decades as it might take to find a way to join it with a new, youthful body. You'd be conscious, able to read, watch TV, even get a job. Tod Mikuriya, the group's consulting psychiatrist in Berkeley, says that his associates are working on reversing the aging of the brain, and that, with adequate funding, the group could put a human on their machine three years after first experimenting with animals.

Meanwhile, since 1966, transplanting a brain to a support system has been technically possible, says Dr. Robert White, co-chairman of the neurosurgery department at Case Western Reserve Medical School. (See "Put Your Head On My Shoulder," *New Times*, May 1, 1978.) White, who has pioneered with monkey head transplants, thinks it might be even easier to transplant a human head because of already existing devices such as heart-lung machines. But, he says, because of "social implications," it has not been attempted yet.

With genetic engineering, hormone manipulation, chemical agents, cloning, transplants and capitate support systems, nature may one day have but a single remaining instrument of death—Fate. Accidental death by car crash, earthquake, flood or explosion would be far more tragic for an immortal than for a mortal, depriving him of millenia, not mere decades. But F.M. Esfandiary, the immortality movement's eternal optimist, is designing the ultimate weapon against death—a life support suit. He describes it as "attractive, weatherproof, fireproof, bulletproof, sinkproof and electricalproof." And, what's more, in case of sudden death, the temperature in the suit will automatically drop to the level necessary to preserve the body until a revival team from the nearest telemedical monitoring center arrives. ●

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Television/by Richard M. Levine

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

"Next week I'm going to be born," author Alex Haley is saying over the telephone. "I'll meet you at the naming ceremony." It takes a moment to sink in. Haley is clearly not talking about being "born again," that favorite pastime of his native South, or about "rebirthing," its secular equivalent in sensitivity-trained Los Angeles, where he lives now. He is talking about the filming of *Roots: The Next Generations*, which is presently in production at the Disney Ranch outside L.A. and continues the story of his family from their move to Henning, Tennessee, after the Civil War through the author's own geneological search. It will air next winter, two years after the original *Roots* became the most-watched TV show in history and at the same time one of the few solid arguments against television having its tubes tied permanently. ABC, of course, fervently hopes that this new 24-hour, $16-million extravaganza will be an even greater ratings and critical success. And to help smooth the way and boost its ratings at the same time the network is rerunning the original *Roots* (12 hours made for a bargain-basement $6 million) from September 5–10. It is no coincidence that September 11 is the start of the new television season on ABC.

In television the original *Roots* was an eight-day wonder, the equivalent of a week of Super Bowls (two shows on Saturday) or *Jaws* I-VIII inclusive. The last episode of the mini-series was seen by 90 million people, and all eight episodes were among the top 13 ratings leaders in history. Of course, success on this scale is rarely predictable, but the fact is that very few people connected with the project predicted success on *any* scale. Commercial spots in the mini-series were sold in advance on the basis of a relatively modest 30 share. At the last moment Fred Silverman rescheduled the show, which was supposed to run on successive weeks (ABC's proven formula for *Rich Man, Poor Man* the year before), to successive nights, so that if it turned out to be a gigantic flop it would at least be a self-contained flop. Moreover, he chose a week just *before* a "sweep" period, a time when ratings surveys measure the audience of local affiliates and the networks try to put on their strongest shows.

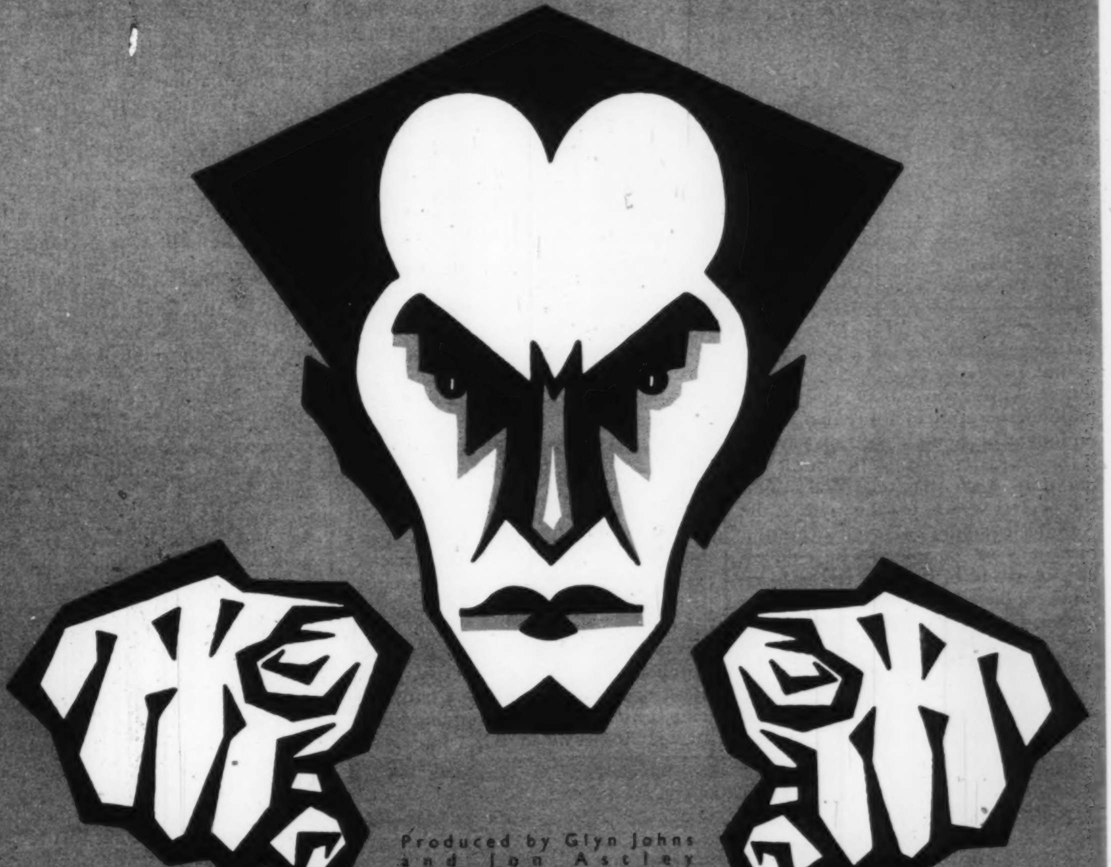
Silverman appeared to have sufficient cause for concern. Blacks on television have made great strides in the seventies, but the gains have come almost entirely on sitcoms and variety shows rather than dramas. In its portrayal of black life the medium was still largely a minstrel show. Moreover, *Roots* was not only a dramatic show about blacks, it was an historical drama, a genre that generally spells sudden death on television. And not only was it an historical drama but it was about the single most shameful episode in American history—slavery—which it recounted entirely from the victim's point of view. *Roots* was the mirror image of *Gone with the Wind*'s prettied-up picture of loyal slaves and loving masters. It could not have eased Fred Silverman's worst apprehensions about *Roots* to know that prior to its airing the most popular program in the history of television had been a recent showing of that movie.

Before going out to the *Roots II* location I screened the original program to try to get some kind of bead on its enormous appeal. Clearly, there's a lot wrong with the show. Much of the dialogue has the See-Kunta-Run quality of a grade school primer. In terms of rounded character portrayal, all of the white characters and most of the black ones might as well have been fashioned out of pipe cleaners. The S & M crowd certainly got its share of maiming, whipping and forced miscegenation (in fact, a scene was put in that is not to be found in the already violence-laden book). And yet viewing *Roots* for the second time was still an undeniably powerful experience. Often it is powerful *despite* itself. I think this is possible because *Roots* is no mere story but a full-blown myth, and myths can be told, or retold, in any number of art forms from the Great Novel to the Classic Comic (the level of *Roots*) to the inside of bubble gum wrappers without losing their essential appeal.

In the case of *Roots*, what is being told is the most extreme version yet of the preeminent television myth about the American family. With all the fashionable McLuhanesque talk about the effect of various media on the central nervous system, the global villagers vs. the linear high-risers, what is often overlooked is the obvious notion that the medium may be the message but it is also where the message is heard. I don't think it's possible to exaggerate the fact that television is the only medium that is heard almost exclusively in the home. (In terms of the all-important survey of exactly who is listening, there is no "almost" about it: The A.C. Nielsen Co. doesn't place its little black boxes in bars or college dorms or any other place where single people might congregate. When it occasionally places one inside a single person's home, that person immediately becomes known as a "Nielsen family.") Thus, television has inevitably become the self-appointed apologist for the family, its mythologist. Radio, by contrast, has changed radically now that it is primarily piped into automobiles rather than homes. With its round-the-clock fare of traffic reports for commuters, rock music for teenagers and psychological advice for angst-ridden housewives, radio's message is the profoundly anti-familial one of personal liberation, of psychic as well as physical *mobility*, which is the automotive myth *par excellence*.

Since any myth about a fast-changing social institution must be both timeless and perpetually out of date—that is, rooted in nostalgia—the TV family is a hopelessly rear-guard attempt to preserve an ideal image at the expense of an unpleasant reality. Just after World War II, when young families were moving from the cities to fenced-off boxes in the suburbs in search of maximum privacy, television was showing us such ethnic, inner-city, extended family, shout-out-the-window-at-your-neighbor fables as *I Remember Mama* and *The Goldbergs*. Later, in the fifties, when all the gray flannel suits barely got off the commuter train in time to kiss the kids good night, television gave us the father as homebody in such shows as *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* and *The Life of Riley*. These fathers practically never *left* home. Then throughout the sixties, when the divorce rate was rising precipitously, one would have thought the Vatican was running the networks for all the subject came up on American television. If, increasingly, married children's main contact with their parents is over the telephone (after 5 p.m.), television's response is to show us a supposedly sophisticated, liberal, urban couple like Gloria and Mike living with Archie and Edith. (Fortunate-

-WHO ARE YOU-



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ly, when the Stivics had a baby last year, the reality of the situation forced the producers of *All in the Family* to move them out of the Bunkers' home—to the house next door.) For next year Norman Lear has come up with a new wrinkle in his never-flagging effort to resuscitate a hopelessly outdated family image. In a new sitcom called *Apple Pie*, Rue McClanahan will put together a kind of ersatz extended family through the want ads. But even television can no longer pretend that the American family is alive and well and living in a split-level house with a white picket fence around it. The trend in sitcoms will continue to move away from blood-related families to the work-related "family" epitomized by *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

Beginning in the early seventies, blacks were allowed to play the TV family game in part because they could give wildly idealized American values, particularly *family* values, a new lease on life. In *The Jeffersons*, George represents the upwardly-mobile, go-getting, middle-class ethic in a way that would no longer be credible, even in parody, if the character were white. But it was not until *Roots* that television found the perfect vehicle for the myth of the American family. For over a century, historians and sociologists have debated the extent of damage to the black family inflicted by slavery, but to my knowledge no one before Alex Haley ever suggested that slavery might have done some *good* in that regard.

The one thing that slavery had going for it in terms of family bonds, according to *Roots*, was that it eliminated the problem of mobility. I'm not being at all facetious. The starkest illustration of this theme in the film occurs when Kunta Kinte is captured and offered the horrendous choice of being castrated or maimed—in effect, a choice between fertility and mobility. His decision literally makes the family possible. At several other crucial points in the plot essentially the same choice is made. One occurs just after the naming ceremony in which Kunta Kinte holds his infant daughter Kizzy up to the night sky. Suddenly he hears the drums that signal a slave revolt, but he is talked out of joining it by his wife Bell's plea that his new family responsibilities must come before freedom. Two generations later, when Chicken George threatens to kill slave-owner Tom Moore, Kizzy dissuades him by revealing that "it'd be killing your own flesh and blood. He's your papa. You're his son." And even after manumission, the family elects to remain in North Carolina despite the brutal harassment of the nightriders because Chicken George has not yet returned home. "Ain't nobody gonna leave until he gets back," his wife, Matilda, says at the family council. "We is a family and we is gonna stay a family." Thus, while the announced theme of *Roots* is the spirit of freedom that has been handed down from "the African" to successive generations of a close-knit family, the unspoken theme is that family and freedom are mutually exclusive needs. And every time the conflict is brought to a crisis point, *Roots* opts for the family—a truly stirring testimonial to a beleaguered institution. Someone at ABC must have figured out exactly how appealing this message would be. In its promotion for *Roots* the network changed the subtitle of the book, "the saga of an American family," to "the *triumph* of an American family."

Déjà Vu: On the set, Haley (right), Haley (in blanket) and grandfather of Haley

But it is in *Roots: The Next Generations* that Haley's mother-flag-and-apple-pie values really surface. The family's climb to middle-class respectability is quick and permanent. Chicken George's son Tom Harvey becomes a successful blacksmith. Tom's daughter Cynthia marries Will Palmer, the eventual owner of the Henning lumber yard and the wealthiest black in the area. Their daughter Bertha marries Alex's father, Simon Haley, who becomes a college professor and pushes his three sons as hard as he pushed himself. One becomes a lawyer, another an architect, and the third, a college dropout who spent 20 years in the Coast Guard, becomes, with the publication of *Roots*, not merely an enormously successful author but a national hero.

Just how successful the stocky, bespectacled, 56-year-old author has become was measured by a recent Roper poll, which found him to be the third most admired black man in America among black youths, after Muhammad Ali and Stevie Wonder. He has acquired millions of dollars, over a dozen honorary doctorates and enough other awards to keep a boyhood friend on his payroll running out to Perma Plaque in Los Angeles almost daily. And yet somehow Haley has managed to remain a warm, almost courtly man who greets each autograph request with "my pleasure," even a recent one from a central casting stage mother who had just asked him: "Now that you've helped the blacks, when are you going to do something for the Jewish people?" On the set he is, understandably, a bit overawed at times, Alex in Wonderland. Few men get to see their lives lived out before them in living color *without* drowning.

The set itself is a million-dollar toy, a life-size, three-dimensional replica of Henning, Tennessee, which ages over the decades just as the town did. On the day I visited it, the company was filming a sequence that takes place after World War I, midway through the eight-episode series. Haley's father, home from the war, has just married his mother and the wedding reception is taking place on the front lawn of grandfather Will Palmer's stately house, where Alex Haley grew up. Since the real wood-and-brick structure may soon become a national monument, it has been reproduced with even more precision than the rest of Henning, right down to the cracks on the concrete porch where, as a boy,

Photograph by Bruce Tolloman

Alex Haley listened to his grandmother and great-aunts retelling the family legends. The set is blazing hot in the far reaches of Antelope Valley, a situation not at all helped by the silver-foil reflectors and giant lights that illuminate it even at high noon. The actors are milling around buffet tables laden with crystal bowls and silverware that comes, as one character says incredulously, "all de way from de Tiffany store in New York City." The men wear straw boaters and spats, the women wide-brimmed hats and flouncy dresses. If the brutality in the original *Roots* was sometimes hard to bear, what is remarkable, even shocking, about this scene is its sheer middle-class normality. It is difficult to keep in mind that these Southern blacks are living in a time of some of the country's bloodiest race riots.

The next scene, Alex Haley's naming ceremony, takes place at night in front of the house. The real Alex, who has brought a group of friends to the set to witness the occasion, is showing off the infant who will play him. "Look at that baby smile," someone says. "You'd be smiling, too," Haley says, "if you were working at his age."

The director calls for "places" and a first take of the scene is shot. Will Palmer, carrying the baby, walks out of the house, followed by his wife and daughter. He holds the infant up over his head to bathe in the moon's glow—as we saw Kunta Kinte's father do with him and Kunta do with Kizzy—while his wife says: "Moon, this here is the seventh generation since then. This here is Alex Haley. You watch over him."

Two things are wrong with the scene. The first is that it never happened, as Haley readily admits, since Will Palmer was not a direct descendant of Kunta Kinte's and would have had little interest in the ceremony. But more important is the false promise of family unity that the scene—and all 26 hours of *Roots I and II*—holds out as fact. Alex Haley's mother died when he was 10, and he argued with his father all his life, as future episodes will show. He married at 21, became a chief petty officer in the Coast Guard, and spent very little time with his two children as they were growing up. He has been divorced for many years. Some of his oldest friends in Los Angeles did not even know until recently that he had grown children. Clearly, in Alex Haley, television has finally found a man whose insatiable nostalgia for the vanishing dream of the American family matches its own. ●

Richard M. Levine is researching network television on an Alicia Patterson Foundation fellowship.

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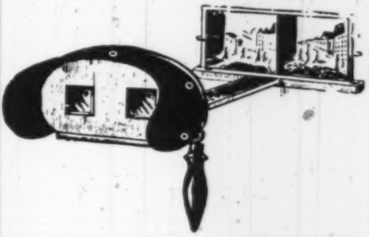

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Movies/By Richard Corliss

INTERIOR DECLARATION

Today's challenge for a movie critic: Write about Woody Allen's new film, **Interiors**, without mentioning (a) Ingmar Bergman, (b) *The New Yorker*, (c) psychoanalysis, (d) Jews who are fascinated with WASPs, (e) comics who want to play *Hamlet*, or write it, (f) the Woody Allen persona, which comprises all of the above.

It can't be done. No matter how hard you try to view *Interiors* as a film on its own—a movie to be approached with the same absorbed disinterest we might bring to the work of an unfamiliar writer-director—you can't help seeing *this* movie as both a continuation and a renunciation of the themes that have preoccupied Woody Allen since he first surfaced on nightclub stages in the early sixties. He was a small, nervous, homely-cute comic figure, squinting up into the unblinking spotlight of his audience's deferred judgment. He thought funny and he looked funny—he could have played a cameo role in a U.P.A. cartoon version of *Fantastic Voyage*, as a perforated ulcer wearing oversized glasses and a guilty grimace—and, more important, he looked the way he thought; he had that rare combination of anatomy and intellect that makes a star movie comic. His persona became so recognizable and appealing that he was soon not only the star of his own movies but the hero of his own comic strip.

And a *New Yorker* short-story writer to boot. Woody was the mind of S.J. Perelman set loose in Groucho's body. It could only happen in the seventies, a decade that has obliterated the lines between high art and pop culture. And it could probably only happen with Woody Allen, a complexly humorous human being who has made us laugh by putting a lot of himself on paper and film. The mind behind *Sleeper* and *Love and Death* and especially *Annie Hall* seemed a perfect match for the dour, winsome face on the screen. We found it easy to love New York-neurotic Woody (and his Sunbelt-neurotic sweetie, Diane Keaton). As thanks, we made *Annie Hall* a hit and gave it four Oscars.

If Woody Allen means to say anything to his fans with *Interiors*, it's likely to be: "Don't think you know me. You can't force me to be always funny. I can be as cool as Donald Barthelme, as serious as Ann Beattie. I can disappear behind the camera. You may want me to be a cuddly Henny Youngman, but I may want to be a Jewish Ingmar Bergman." And sure enough, *Interiors* has the studied, elliptical look—and the four strong, troubled female characters—of Bergman's magisterial *Cries and Whispers* (the scenario for which was published in *The New Yorker*). It's faithful also to the standard Bergman closet psychodrama: a family of achievers who have never achieved a true sense of family; no outsiders; indeed, as the title suggests, no outside. We're taking X-rays of the psyche here, and the pictures ain't pretty.

Diane Keaton as Renata: A humorless Annie Hall

Right from the opening credits (clean, crisp, white-on-black), we're alerted not to expect any funny business. We're not sure what to expect. And because these credits omit the names of the actors, the uninformed viewer doesn't even know *whom* to expect. Maybe Woody won't be in his own movie. Or maybe—we begin to hope, halfway through the most solemn film since *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928)—maybe he will. Yes: Just as one of his characters is declaiming a sentiment Woody would normally use as a set-up line in one of his *feuilletons* (e.g., "Still obsessed by thoughts of death, I brood constantly. I keep wondering if there is an afterlife..."), the real Woody Allen will pop onto the screen with the punch line ("...and if there is will they be able to break a twenty?").

We're not even through the credits, and already there's another problem: the credit that reads "Written and Directed by Woody Allen." Now, "Woody Allen" is an appropriately funny, friendly name for a comedian—which, we may assume, is the reason Allen Konigsberg chose it for himself when he began writing for Sid Caesar some 20 years ago. And it's served the succeeding stages of his persona—up to now. Critics, for example, have never troubled much to separate Woody the character, Woody Allen the actor, and Allen the director. But *Interiors* poses a problem for critics: Do we call the movie "a glimpse at the dark side of the Allenian mindscape" or "Woody's most mature statement on the human condition?"

For this critic, there's no problem. Woody Allen's mind, as we have come to know it, is dark enough in his comedies: *Love and Death* is about, among other things, love and death; Annie Hall has an anxiety attack that is more direct and frightening (and Bergmanesque) than any of the analysandblasts in *Interiors*. And if Woody thinks his family of artist-aristocrats with their fastidious traumas represents the human condition, he's been spending too much time at the Angst counter at Bloomingdale's. Granted, people suffer, and make movies about suffering. But rarely have souls been bared—even in the movies—in so rarefied an atmosphere as you'll find in *Interiors*.

And, I'll wager, no commercial film has contained dialogue with so many

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abstract nouns, so few connections with the concrete, the quotidian, the survivor's making-do. The characters in *Interiors* are obsessed, not with suffering, but with talking about it. You could say that that's precisely the film's point: that these people (a poet, a novelist, a filmmaker, an actress) are self-conscious but not self-aware, that their immersion in the work of creating art has predisposed them to examine their emotions before they experience them, that they've become sophisticated voyeurs of their own feelings. You could say that Woody Allen has withdrawn the punch lines we expect to follow and deflated their rhetoric in order for us to see them as figures of sympathy rather than of derision.

You could say all these things, but you'd be wrong—or at least missing the point. Diane Keaton's Annie Hall was as earnest and confused as her Renata in *Interiors*; Annie was as serious about her troubles, and moviegoers could take her seriously, could sympathize, even fondle at one remove—her realness was a crucial factor in the movie's success. Besides, Woody Allen has always been suspicious of those on-top-of-it exemplars of the Me Decade; his favorite characters are the "who, me?" people, cynical romantics who understand that, in an absurdist world, the absurdest and most heroic thing to do is to hang around, scratching one's head, farming in the back of the mind for a lifesaving wisecrack. His earlier work reflected the accommodation with the void. At its best, it was a laugh-a-minute *Godot*.

Woody Allen has forgotten this with *Interiors*. By protecting his characters from life's banana peels, he's insulated them from the special pain of comic humiliation—which is as serious a test of human resilience as any alienation therapy the genteel gentiles of *Interiors* could endure. And he's isolated his characters from a movie audience which, however eager to breathe with and learn from anybody Woody Allen thinks worthy of making a movie about, nonetheless believes that even artists do such mundane things as worry about money, watch TV, take out the garbage—and occasionally leave a banana peel lying around.

It's a failure of both form and craft. Form: You can make a "serious" film, but when your characters are all humorless people you run the risk of confusing manner and matter; it's hard for an audience to distinguish between the characters and your attitude toward them. Craft: Woody Allen is a superb—and serious—comic writer, with a marvelous talent for unmasking the self-deceptions in hip, contemporary American speech; it's okay for him suddenly to find an awkward, minimalist poetry in the diction he used to find fatuous, but only if he's created a dramatic context in which the cliches can seem profound or poignant. Try as he may, the dialogue for *Interiors* sounds like something from a Freudian soap opera—*The Secret Sturm und Drang*.

I haven't enjoyed writing this. Most critics I know who don't like *Interiors* feel a little guilty about attacking a film so audacious and heartfelt—particularly one created by so eminent and vulnerable a filmmaker. We also feel queasy when we crack jokes about the movie; something tells us that the seriousness of the enterprise demands a rebuttal delivered with a straight face, our hands folded on the desk. But this is to fall into the trap that Woody Allen set for himself when he determined to make *Interiors*: the belief that you can't be serious and funny at the same time.

"When you do comedy," Woody told *Newsweek*, "you're not sitting at the grownups' table, you're sitting at the childrens' table." This is what bothers me most about *Interiors*: Woody Allen seems to think that renouncing comedy is a noble thing, like swearing off potato chips. But when he made a movie without humor, he deprived his work of its vitality and technique, its life and art. *Interiors* is not, as Woody may think, a step up toward the Pantheon of *real* film or literature. It's a step out—onto the banana peel of his laudable but misguided ambitions.

Maybe I should feel guilty, too, about liking **The Driver**. Not only was it derisively panned by most critics, it's just about the only box-office flop in a bonanza movie summer. In a week at seven New York theaters, *The Driver* grossed about what *Interiors* made at *one* theater. Ironically, the two films stand together as cool, Europeanized studies in alienation at a time when Hollywood is making big bucks with celebrations of American adolescence. But whereas *Interiors* inhabits an analysis wonderland where the dialogue is as sterile as the decor, and the most extreme act of violence is a condescending stare, *The Driver* uses its homeless parolees from the Good Life and its stylized backgrounds (a steel and neon vision of Anycity, U.S.A., in 1984) to reconsider the men and moods of the classical American gangster film.

In a sense, *The Driver* is a *film noir* twice removed from its source: It has the feeling not only of the cynical Hollywood movies of the forties but of the existential gangster films Europe has produced over the past two decades—Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless*, Wim Wenders' *The American Friend*, André Téchiné's *Barocco* and especially Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samourai* (released briefly in America as *The Godson*). As critics Stuart Byron and Carlos Clarens point out, the getaway driver played by Ryan O'Neal is a soft-spoken loner with the menace of potential psychopathy, very much in the tradition of Alain Delon's hired gun in *Le Samourai*. The driver lives alone, in a sparsely furnished room in an abandoned warehouse; whenever we see him there, he's not reading, knitting, keeping a diary or even watching TV—he just lies on his bed, awake, alone, emotionally detached from everyone, including the gangsters who pay him to spirit them away, like Charon, into the underworld. The scenes of this loner at rest are reminiscent of similar shots of Delon in *Le Samourai*—which were inspired by scenes of lone-wolf killer Alan Ladd in the 1942 *This Gun for Hire*.

But *The Driver* is more than the sum of its borrowings. It brings all these genre conventions back home and places them around some of the most ingeniously orchestrated chase sequences to be seen since American movies became fascinated with multiple-vehicle car-nage. The chases and crashes are enough to keep an action audience happy (at least they pleased the Broadway audience I saw the movie with), but they also fit nicely into writer-director Walter Hill's scheme. The cars *and* their drivers are death machines, vessels of an impersonal apocalypse, careening through uninhabited city streets, moving without cease or cause. The world may have ended but the engines keep running, and the only scream we hear is that of the brakes.

What makes *The Driver* a fine *American* movie is its sense of play amid all the desolation. It's essentially a bleakly wry comedy in its pitting of the nowhere-man driver against a garrulous cop obsessed with bagging his prey. As played (nicely, for a change) by Bruce Dern, the cop is part Jean Valjean, part Kojak, part Wile E. Coyote doggedly setting his traps for the uncatchable Road Runner. And so the fight between these deadly antagonists is also a clash of social, temperamental and acting styles: the super-minimal O'Neal (again proving he's a most versatile and underrated actor) against the smiling, fast-talking, broadly-gesturing Dern. To me, it seems that *The Driver* has something for everyone: humor, a heist, some exciting auto-exoticism, even a dash of emotional claustrophobia for the *Interiors* crowd. But nobody else seems to like it. It's enough to make me alienated. Obsessed by thoughts of rejection, I brood constantly. I keep wondering if there is an afterlife for movies like *The Driver* . . . and if there is will the cashier be able to break a twenty? ●

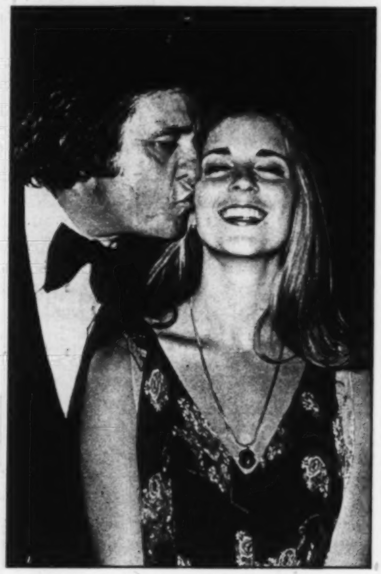
Music/By Blanche McCrary Boyd

CARLENE CARTER: IN HER OWN RIGHT

The ambitious children of famous people face a special set of difficulties. They do not need to claw their way toward opportunity. Doors open magically on lubricated hinges. Media people clamber after them because they are instant good copy. After all, regardless of their own merits, they can be framed within their family histories. These advantages, unfortunately, do not make the children of the famous either talented or original. The shadows of their distinguished parents hang over them permanently. They must struggle against the accomplishments and sharply defined identities of forebears to whom they are automatically compared. Establishing a separate creative self is, to understate the case, problematic. Ask Hank Williams Jr.

These are some of the reasons why, at Carlene Carter's debut at the Bottom Line in New York City, I was not surprised to see Caroline Kennedy sitting at a front table. I was not surprised to find out that Hank Williams Jr. was there also. I wouldn't have been surprised to discover Debby Boone, Desi Arnaz Jr., Margaux Hemingway, Candice Bergen, or Jean Michel Jarre, scattered through the audience. I wouldn't even have been surprised to see Paul McCartney's toddlers earnestly sucking lemonade through straws, their tiny feet dangling over the edges of the Bottom Line's uncomfortable chairs, studying Carlene Carter for clues to independent survival.

Carlene Carter is a third-generation singer/songwriter, but her first album and tour demonstrate that she is a talent in her own right. Hank Williams Jr. may proclaim his independence from his tragic father, but his music remains riddled with pathetic references, and he sings too many of his father's songs. Debby Boone often looks like her father in drag, and she attempts to mine the same vein, linking low-key sexuality with low-key, semireligious wholesomeness. Carlene Carter has a country music pedigree that makes her an aristocrat of that just-plain-folks medium, but she has extended the musical achievements of her famous family with a boldness that makes Hank Williams Jr. and Debby Boone look, well, half-assed.



Pedigreed Family: Cash and Carlene

Carlene is the daughter of June Carter and the stepdaughter of Johnny Cash. She is the granddaughter of Maybelle Carter, the queen of country music, and the great-niece of A.P. Carter, who has written many country classics. She is also the daughter of Carl Smith, who recorded many popular country tunes during the fifties, and who now raises horses on a farm in the Tennessee Valley.

Coming from a family of stars did not protect Carlene from an emotionally confusing childhood. Her parents separated permanently before she was born. June Carter soon wed Rip Nix and had another daughter, but that marriage disintegrated too. By the time her mother was happily married to Johnny Cash, Carlene was 11 years old.

Carlene is only 22 years old, but already her personal life has been turbulent. She first married at 15, and soon had a daughter, Tiffany. Divorce followed, but at 18, Carlene married again, this time to a songwriter under contract to the House of Cash publishing company. That marrage also ended in divorce, but not before Carlene had a second child, a son, Jackson. Currently she is involved with Nick Lowe, the English pop singer. "He's just great," she told me. "It's the kind of relationship I've always wanted. He just doesn't seem to have all those American male ego problems." But in "Who Needs Words," a mournfully loving tune which seems to be about Lowe, she wrote, "Sooner than later we'll be the others/It's written in our songs," so I suspect her view of that relationship is more complex than she was willing to discuss.

When I first heard the album *Carlene Carter,* I was mainly impressed with with the band she was working with, Graham Parker's The Rumour. The Rumour is a smart, tight, punkish band with a precise sense of exuberance, a formal-garden-of-violence quality, and matching it with Carlene's country/southern influences was a clever gambit.

The second time I listened to *Carlene Carter* it was no longer The Rumour's creativity I was tuning in on, but Carlene's lyrics. She makes amazingly complicated emotional shifts in short musical spaces, by turns angry, compassionate, gentle, ruthless and loving, threading together images in patterns that are bizarre and fascinating. "I Once Knew Love" is full of the kind of phrases and images that play themselves over and over in your mind:

You smile your jaded smile
But I know who you are
You're just another drunken driver
At the wheel of the car
And the wheel is spent. . . . *

The first two lines imply insight, a sense of vision about the man she's singing to, but the epiphany is startling: You have the soul of a drunken driver. But Carlene pushes this peculiar image even farther in the remainder of the verse.

It was when I realized this that I began to appreciate how beautifully and carefully she fashions melodies. She only wrote (or co-wrote) four tunes on *Carlene Carter,* but they are all outstanding. Maybe playing with The Rumour is even a mistake. Maybe they take too much of the focus away from her songwriting. At any rate, after this initial tour, Carlene will face the problem of forming her own band. The Rumour has other obligations, to Parker and to themselves. "I'm going to be so spoiled I'm not gonna know what to do. They make my songs sound like I want them to sound, and I

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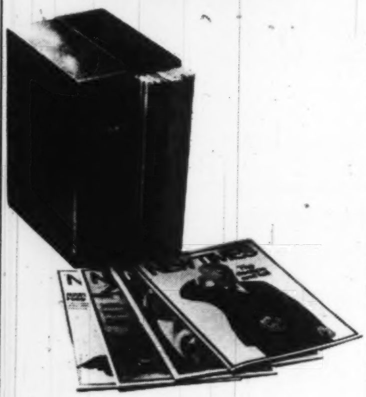

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can't do that by myself, just me and a guitar."

The persona Carlene projects through her album and in performance is world-wise, somewhat cynical but still vulnerable. There is something of the punk about her, the bad kid, the kid they said wouldn't amount to much, the troublemaker. Her first night at the Bottom Line she was wearing a dress made of black scarves; the second night, blue jeans, a T-shirt and a button that said, "Yes, but is it art?" She opened both sets wearing enormous dark glasses with glitter on them. When she is nervous she touches her hair continually, but she has confidence as a performer. That's part of her inheritance. So is the twang, the disarming country pronunciations that make words like "gone" have two syllables. And when she whips off those dark glasses, you notice with shock June Carter's features leaning out of her daughter's face. Still, if it weren't for June Carter's face and a lot of record company publicity, you might not guess that Carlene Carter was born with a silver microphone in her mouth.

She's not a country singer, she's a rock-and-roller. Her country influences have been transformed into that sound critics call Southern rock. Not all of her songs are as good as the ones on the album. However, one of her finest tunes is not on the album at all. "Easy From Now On," which she co-authored with Susanna Clark, is the opening cut of Emmylou Harris' latest album, *Quarter Moon in a Ten Cent Town.* It's a beautifully written country ballad about a woman determined to assuage heartache with casual sex: "Saturday night gonna make myself a name/Take a month of Sundays to try and explain. . . ." But it's probably too purely country to play with The Rumour.

At the Bottom Line, Emmylou Harris was in the audience. The band went backstage, and Emmylou came up to sing "Easy From Now On" with Carlene. Hearing Harris' full, rich voice and exquisitely worked phrasing, I realized there was something flat, abrupt, almost brutal about Carlene Carter's voice. She is an adequate singer, not an outstanding one. But her songwriting is enough to make her weaknesses as a singer irrelevant.

When I interviewed Carlene at the St. Regis hotel in New York City, I was struck by the contrast between the image she projects in her work and the sweet, sunny self she presented to me in conversation. She seemed evasively agreeable no matter what I asked about. Her manager remained in the room with us while we talked, which seemed unnecessary. I wondered if there was something they were worried I would inquire about.

I began with a question about her musical tastes. "I like every kind of music," she said. "I like every single kind."

I remarked mildly that she could have done without her opening act, Peter Cofield, whose self-indulgence bordered on the comic.

"Yeah, well, he has his good points, I guess."

A dictum of Southern women: Don't say anything if you can't say something nice.

What about her country heritage? "The thing was, I got signed as a country artist. I went over to London, you know, supposed to do a country album, but I think we were just pulling one over on 'em. I might have deceived them just a little bit, led them to believe I was gonna do "Wildwood Flower." But everybody ended up being real happy, and I got to do what I wanted to do."

Another dictum of Southern women: Don't confront. And a little duplicity can be handy.

Carlene told me about being interviewed by *People* magazine. "I ran into the reporter the night before the interview, in a bar. He walks up to me and I'm sitting there with my drink in my hand. Oh God, I'm thinking, he's gonna print this in *People* magazine and my mother will read it and find out that I drink."

"She must know you drink."

"No. I told her that he lied." We all laughed, even the silent manager. "It's much easier than breaking her heart. She'd worry about me day and night. She'd worry I'd get drunk or something, take advantage of some guy or something."

Do her parents expect her to be successful?

"I think they're gonna be real surprised. They thought I would do good, I just don't think they knew exactly how fast it would happen. Because a year ago I was an extremely unhappy person. I was getting over all my . . . family problems. All that pain made me stronger. I believe that. So I just think . . . God must like me a lot."

Is she religious? Her family is known to be. "I guess so. I . . . probably don't have the right sort of morals. Like, Billy Graham wouldn't approve of some of the things I do. I sort of know someone's looking after me. I ask little favors. I talk to him. I say, Lord, don't let me sweat on my guitar strings."

Carlene praying sounds a lot like Carlene swearing. She has that edge to her, even with her manager listening to every word. ●

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Books/By Geoffrey Wolff

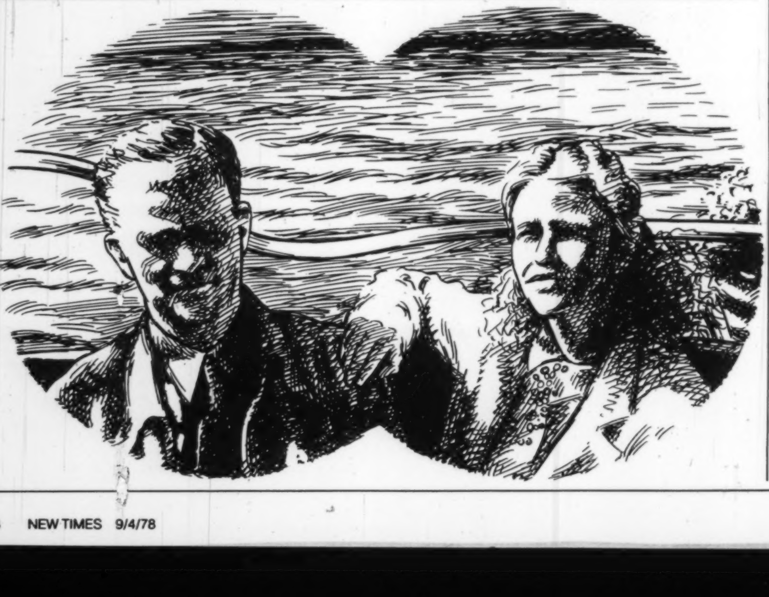
PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE, UNFINISHED

A Love in Shadow
by John R. Boettiger.
Norton
(279 pp., illustrated, $10.95).

John Boettiger's mother, Anna, had as parents Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and his father, John, did not. To say such a plain-minded thing about two complicated people is to say a great deal about marriages like theirs. I flinch from such locutions as *like theirs*, but here some generalizing language seems justified, especially given Boettiger's own search for patterns and universals in the welter of his parents' lives apart and together. To be the daughter or the son-in-law of the two most visible personages on earth is to be dealt certain cards. To throw them in is to fold rather than improve the hand.

Boettiger's father folded. In 1950, when the author was 11, the senior John Boettiger jumped from a seventh-floor window of a New York hotel. He left rational letters explaining his wish to die, and one of them was to Anna Roosevelt, from whom he had been estranged since 1947. Like his love letters, copiously quoted by his son, the suicide note has a formal quality, almost like a public speech. It closes with a high-minded sentiment: "And my love and a world of good luck to you and our Johnny." He also left a note for his son, which the son was not allowed for many years to see. The father asked to be understood, as though he had decided to change his line of work rather than bull past a male nurse two days after a first suicide attempt, and through an open window. As Boettiger drily remarks: "For an eleven-year-old son it was much to ask."

A Love in Shadow is a decent, earnest, moving and usually intelligent engagement with his father's suicide. It is candid: "Until very recently I lived with the experience of my father's death so powerfully marked in my consciousness that, in effect, there was no room for his life." To redress (one of Boettiger's favorite, and typically healing, words) this exclusion the author, who describes himself as teaching and writing about "family studies, the arts of biography and autobiography, and the psychology of the human life cycle," has set about two very different tasks, both of them difficult. He has tried to find his father's past by digging for it with newly-met kin, and he has distilled a history of his mother from Roosevelt books and archives.



This book is never less than generous. It has no villains; although it locates plenty of wrong turns, these are always marked as hindsight re-routings. Boettiger declares his agreement with the decision to withhold letters from him till he was "old enough to begin to read them with understanding and forgiveness," and the declaration jars only because he seems incapable of anything less than understanding and forgiveness.

He often enters the narrative as a judge and a guide, even though he is not born into it till 60 pages before its end. Nevertheless, he seems hardly to exist as a participant in the story. He was almost eight when his parents separated, not at all too young to have vivid memories of his own childhood; these memories, with few exceptions, are sealed from this narrative.

Boettiger's mother, he writes, "did not have easy access to her emotions," a distance she shared with her own mother. One of his father's closest friends described the senior Boettiger as "a little stiff. Tall, ramrod straight, unsmiling, he appeared a little Prussian." Boettiger, then, as he would be the first to note and understand, is his parents' son. His prose is formal, grave, deliberate. There is no anger here, no irreverence. What *A Love in Shadow* tells about its author is that above all he wishes to keep himself to himself.

Powerful forces have directed him toward the sanctuary of a private life. His mother, of course, grew up in the public eye and longed to be left in peace. His father, born and raised in a German middle-class neighborhood in Chicago, a successful reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and later the publisher of William Randolph Hearst's *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, longed for a life of what Boettiger often calls "public consequence." Inclined sometimes toward self-importance, the elder Boettiger provoked his wife's gentle admonitions: "Darling," she wrote him, "there's another thing I hope so desperately hard you agree with me about, and that is that neither of us ever want to be 'big shots' in either a big or little puddle."

It was a fruitless if poignant wish. The Boettigers met during Roosevelt's first presidential campaign, when both of them were already married. Despite their ardor, almost ritualistic in its expression, and the full blessings of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, they were caught in their circumstances, what Boettiger's father called their "fate." One of this book's brilliant moments is Boettiger's compassionate understanding of the position of Anna and her brothers vis-a-vis the great and paralyzed Franklin, "simultane-

Illustration by Oliver Williams

ously absent and inescapable."

He was certainly an inescapable presence for his son-in-law, who assiduously courted the President's good opinion even as he moved as far from the White House, to Seattle, as American geography would allow. Roosevelt, writing to his daughter on her wedding day, called Boettiger "a real man." It is one thesis of this book that Boettiger never believed this estimation of himself, however hard he tried to sell it as an image to a succession of father figures, Colonel McCormick's of the *Chicago Tribune*, McCormick's archenemy President Roosevelt, and Roosevelt's archenemy William Randolph Hearst. Between the lines of *A Love in Shadow* there is a faker, a blue-sky artist whose work when not in journalism, was in public relations.

> **What *A Love in Shadow* tells about its author is that above all he wishes to keep himself to himself**

The Boettiger marriage failed coincidentally with the failure of a Phoenix newspaper the Boettigers founded after the war. Boettiger was in over his head; it seems he was always in over his head, and the more strenuously Anna tried to rescue him, the harder he fought her, the deeper he sank. He declined into habitual bitterness and anger, humiliation and self-defeat, and finally he wore down his wife's love. What it was like to be his son you will not learn from this book.

Boettiger's reticence is especially unfortunate in light of his insistence on what he calls the "preoccupying metaphor" of the "shadowed" childhood. His view of childhood is understandably skeptical; the child, he seems to say, is in a no-win game. Too greatly loved and indulged and shielded (like Franklin) as a child, the adult will expect too much, have too little compassion for those less privileged, too frail a defense against adversity. (Although Roosevelt, God knows, grew into a tough enough nut.)

Boettiger looks especially to "those primal people" in a child's life to explain why the man and woman behave as they do. Certainly *Love in a Shadow* is under the influence of Erik Erikson's seminal *Childhood and Society*, but it also touches notions popularized by Gail Sheehy's *Passages*, particularly the male climacteric at about age 40 identified first by Jung. Boettiger inclines often (but seldom obtrusively) toward the schematic, as he seems to understand when he concedes that "too much can be made of this shadow theme," the no-win childhood. Certainly he raises a potent and moving issue, that love itself can injure, just as a hard childhood can prepare a child for a hard world: "pain killing," Boettiger writes in a striking metaphor, "can itself be a lethal act."

This observation is so resonant and deep because it follows organically from an act: When Franklin Roosevelt was born, he and his mother were almost killed by an overdose of chloroform given to ease the laboring mother's pain. It is an earned generalization, and enjoys an elegance of construction as well as intellegence.

For all his standoffishness, Boettiger is a writer, an exacting craftsman with a nice musical sense sometimes interrupted by a Germanic piling on of words. Instead of saying merely that Eleanor Roosevelt's mother and guardian had been deserted by their husbands, Boettiger writes that they were women "both of whom experienced themselves as deserted by their husbands." He uses words as a shield, as politicians and academics sometimes use them, to scrim off access to something painful. Thus such jargon as "admixture" for the plainer *mixture*. Thus "isolativeness" and "inclination to aloneness" for the plainer, more brutal *loneliness, isolation*. Thus his father's "pattern of depressive experience" for plain, awful *depression*.

Here, at the end of a long and tangled paragraph that compassionately seeks his parents' ambitions for themselves together, is an example of Boettiger's reluctance to engage in the direct language of a participant, the experience of being his father and mother's son: the Boettigers, after the War, longed for a "chance, finally, to redress the growing imbalance of the public and the private in their lives, and thus to recover that centeredness in their love of which they still spoke to one another with fervor."

Boettiger consistently uses the distanced and incorrect "one another" in place of the more intimate and correct *each other* when he places two characters alone together rather than among a crowd. *Love in a Shadow* has so many of the principal virtues—understanding, precision, a willingness to love—that I wish its author had dared a greater dare, had made his portrait from memory as well as from scrapbooks and archives. But this has been his point all along, I guess: Everyone is the prisoner of his childhood, and he experienced his through curtains, confusions and whispers. Maybe, after all, he should have been shown, at once, his father's awful, unintentionally brutal final note to him. ●

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Taking Stock of Country Stores/by William E. Westbrook

FINAL TRIBUTE

The sky is falling. It's been raining cats and dogs and goats for three days. My old '47 Ford truck is waterlogged. The windshield wipers are gasping. The floormats are sponges. What I need is a warm stove.

I am near Lloyd, which is somewhere outside of Roanoke, in southwest Virginia. Lloyd is about 500 feet long as towns go, being actually a curve around Alto Lloyd's general store.

Alto's store is like most country stores that still exist: small, with a wood floor, wood stove, wood counter and wood shelves. There couldn't be more than 50 items for sale in the whole place. That's counting the two pairs of shoes in yellowed boxes up on the shelf in the back. One light bulb, bright and naked, hangs in the center of the store next to the smokestack. Around the fire three tanned and creased farmers sit talking quietly on benches and shiny boards placed crossways on nail kegs.

Alto himself is what you call American. He will never take Richard Nixon's picture down from the bulletin board by the front window. Nor Spiro's. Alto keeps his appearance neat and anticommunist. His hair is the length of his eyebrows. He is, in short, a piece of work.

Alto asks if I'm staying in town long. Oh, about another 200 feet, I answer. He laughs and maybe takes to me a little. As I look around I notice a huge, hand-painted American flag on the ceiling.

"I did that myself," Alto says proudly. "I don't think most people understand what it means, do you? The red means we shed our blood to get our independence. Our freedom. The white means we done it as Christians. We are Christians and God's fightin' on our side. And the blue means you can look till you're damn well blue in the face and you'll never find a better country than this one. Now that's the way I understand it."

He lifts the lid on the stove with an iron poker and tosses in a few more sticks of wood to fight the draft that flutters Spiro's picture. The men shift on their seats and lean closer to the warmth. Over in the corner a beagle pup snuggles down for a nap against a sack of Blue Goose potatoes. It's that kind of day.

Rainy days are good for country stores. Not that actual business picks up all that much, because people mostly don't come to buy. Mostly they come to sit by the stove. With nothing they can do outside, the men come to get away from the womenfolk and share in the easy conversation of people who've grown up together, fought the same droughts, floods, higher seed prices and taxes together, resisted the land developers' advances and the antique dealers' bargaining for items they're not through using yet. Maybe they are antiques themselves.

Country stores have always been the places they could get together. But over the years the big grocery chains have moved into rural towns, and folks travel the extra distance to get the extra selection. Travel right past the small stores that used to give them everything they needed.

Alto doesn't sell as much as in years past. Or even the same things. "I don't carry the hardware goods as much," he says, looking around the room. "I only carry what folks ask for any more. Which ain't much." There are no specials. "Just the fact that I got it makes it special," he says with a chuckle.

Just then a woman comes into the store. Conversation dims. She nods hello, picks up a brown bag and quietly goes about filling it. After she's gotten a few things, she nods politely again and leaves without paying. I look at Alto.

"There goes the reason I don't make anything here," he says as he sadly shakes his head. "My best customer is my wife." I laugh, and the other men laugh, too. They push their fertilizer caps back on their heads and roll their cigarette ashes with their little fingers. One spits tobacco juice into a tin can by his chair.

Talk, well, talk runs to rain and crops and hunting. One farmer in Red Camel overalls says tobacco prices are the best he's ever seen. Another says he should have gotten his wheat in sooner. Stories go around about the old days and old ways. The biggest hogs they've ever killed. How to trap skunks. A coon dog named Jeff that could go right up a tree like a squirrel.

A customer pulls up and honks for gas. Alto reluctantly puts on his raincoat and goes outside to help him. "That reminds me," one farmer says, with a spit that almost makes the can, "of the time that fella from New York came by here to get gas. We was all sittin' here and this big Cadillac with a New York license pulls up outside, see. And Alto goes out to give him gas. This fella's smokin' this big cigar and drivin' this big Cadillac and all, see, and he looks around outside and he says to Alto, he says, 'Tell me, how do you folks out here make a livin', it's so poor and all.' Kinda smart-like he says it. Old Alto don't even look up and says, 'Well, we make a livin' off of damn fools like you buyin' our gas.'"

We go on like that over the next few hours. One or two customers come and go, but the weather and the men seem to have settled in for the day. It's accepted matter of factly, a ritual played out over countless rainy days stretching back to the first store.

And yet Alto stares at the rain, his face an expression of resignation and sadness, too. "You know," he says slowly, "a bunch of us were sitting around here in the store one day a while back and one of 'em says, 'Look here, I wonder what ever happened to all those old men you used to see sitting around those country stores and all.' And another one thought for a minute and said, 'All those old men are dead. We're those old men now.'"

This time no one laughs. Suddenly the day is over. The men rise, stretch the wrinkles from their pants and leave.

I turn to Alto and ask directions home. I can't find this spot on my map. Alto stares out at the rain, breathing a soft fog on the window glass. "You ain't on the map here, son," he says quietly, and turns back to the fire. ●

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